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Johnson

Randolph of Roanoke

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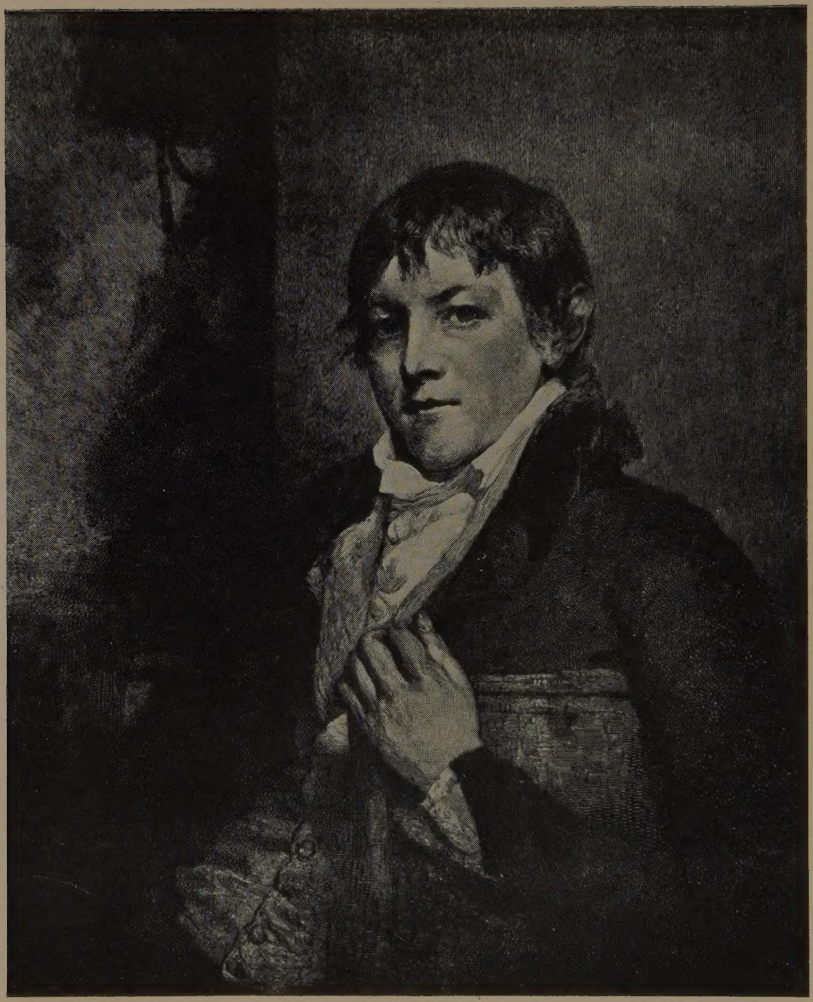
RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE

BY GERALD W. JOHNSON

THE UNDEFEATED
ANDREW JACKSON: AN EPIC IN HOMESPUN
RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE: A POLITICAL FANTASTIC



John Randolph of Roanoke
(PORTRAIT BY GILBERT STUART)

Randolph, John

RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE

A Political Fantastic

BY

GERALD W. JOHNSON

And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him.

—Genesis 16:12

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NEW YORK

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TO

BENJAMIN SLEDD,

A GENTLEMAN OF VIRGINIA

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CHAPTER I

Introducing a Virginian

Randolph of Roanoke

CHAPTER I

Introducing a Virginian

"*I AM* an aristocrat," said John Randolph of Roanoke. "I love justice and hate equality."

Once he tried to collect a debt from a distant cousin. The debtor attacked him with a knife, and although the effort to stab him failed, his coat was cut. Randolph beat his assailant off, first with the lash, and then with the butt, of a riding whip. He escaped from the fracas with no great physical damage, but with a distaste, not difficult to understand, for his attacker, whose name, by sad mischance, was likewise John Randolph. This was the only name he acknowledged, although the neighbors distinguished him by referring to him as " 'Possum John." It was apparently after this encounter that the cred-

itor determined to take action which would effectually draw a distinction between himself and 'Possum John Randolph; so thenceforth he signed his own name, "John Randolph of Roanoke." He was very careful about it. Even when he initialed memoranda and hasty notes, he wrote, "J. R. of R.," rarely "J. R."

The encounter with 'Possum John was so trivial an incident that even in Bruce's monumental work on Randolph it is mentioned only in a footnote. Yet it serves as an excellent introduction to the man, for it is no bad commentary on his whole life. For thirty-odd years one of his principal activities was laying the lash on 'Possum Johns, of high and low degree; and by so doing he made a name for himself. He regarded them, one and all, as scoundrels, and as a matter of fact many of them were. His later encounters only occasionally involved the use either of lethal weapons or of horsewhips, although he employed both more than once; but they were almost invariably, like this one, merciless, dextrous, fantastic and grim. Many another 'Possum John left the field cursing and covered with weals, while the bystanders giggled, seeing in the affair "a raree-

show worth the penny"; but the assailants nearly always came with naked steel in their hands, and their knives sometimes cut deeper than the cloth—a fact which the bystanders frequently ignored.

Moreover, not all the 'Possum Johns were scoundrels. Again and again John Randolph of Roanoke lashed men who deserved rather his admiration and praise; but this also furnished high entertainment for the crowd, and he lost no prestige thereby.

So he has come down in history with one of the most terrible reputations ever attached to an American politician who never was convicted of murder, or treason, or theft. He was in public life for a third of a century. He served as a member of the House of Representatives and was Jefferson's floor-leader there; he served as a Senator from Virginia; he served as American ambassador to Russia; he served in the Constitutional Convention of Virginia, and on many commissions and special missions. But it is not for these services he is remembered, but for carrying the wickedest tongue that ever hung in the head of an American congressman, or at any rate, in the head of one who had both the courage and the wit to use it.

As a matter of fact, nearly every policy for which he stood has long been abandoned, nearly every cause for which he fought was long ago lost. But the way in which he fought has left an imperishable memory. No man since his day, when attacked in debate by half a dozen honorable members, has had the superb insolence to rise and quote, as he leisurely surveyed the United States House of Representatives:

> "The little dogs and all,
> Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart,
> See, they bark at me!"

Nor have we since had invective as startling as the metaphor which he is frequently said to have used against Henry Clay, but which he really applied to Edward Livingston: "Fellow-citizens, he is a man of splendid abilities, but utterly corrupt. Like rotten mackerel by moonlight, he shines and stinks." His characterization of John Quincy Adams and Clay as "Blifil and Black George—the Puritan and the blackleg," hardly needed the duel which followed to stamp it upon the memory of the country, for, although there was no duel as a result, the

country has remembered the description of Thomas Jefferson as "St. Thomas of Cantingbury" because, as in the other case, there was just enough truth in it to make it stick and sting.

But what is largely forgotten is that when John Randolph of Roanoke first approached 'Possum John, it was with the serious and reasonable purpose of collecting some money that was owed him. The fight was incidental and unexpected, although it is doubtless true enough that, after the knife came out, Randolph forgot all about the money, and thought no more of anything save of laying the lash where it would do the most good. So were his later battles fought for a purpose which often became obscured in the fierce joy of combat, but which was in the beginning always intelligible, and frequently admirable.

"When I speak of my country, I mean the Commonwealth of Virginia," he wrote to his friend Francis Scott Key, in 1818. This cuts him off from modern American statecraft, and to a large extent from the understanding of modern Americans. The Commonwealth of Virginia today is not a country, and apparently is well on the way to becoming a

mere geographical expression, such as Ruthenia or Provence. This development Randolph foresaw clearly, but without foreseeing any effective means of combating it other than dogged opposition to every extension of the power of the Federal government, no matter how obvious the need for the specific extension under consideration.

This spirit of opposition he stimulated, if he did not inculcate it, in the minds of his colleagues from the Southern States. The man's influence in Congress for many years was prodigious; and they were the years during which the young John C. Calhoun was learning statecraft. These younger Southern leaders had not known their great predecessors of the South's Augustan Age, or had known them but slightly. John Randolph, on the contrary, had seen George Washington inaugurated, and had been intimate with Jefferson in his prime, had battled with Madison for years, had crossed swords with Patrick Henry in debate, had hobnobbed with Nathaniel Macon and George Mason, had been the "original Monroe man." What could be more natural than for the younger men to assume that he was the Elisha upon whom the patriarchs' mantle had fallen? Unques-

tionably, his views represented to them the spirit of the great Virginians, and were accepted as such all the more readily because they chimed so well with their own prejudices.

It would be far too much to say that John Randolph of Roanoke diverted the spirit of Southern statecraft from the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson to that of Jefferson Davis; but it is incontestably true that he witnessed the transition and that he assisted it. When he entered public life, Jefferson was the unquestioned leader of Southern political thought; when he abandoned it, Calhoun was that leader; and John Randolph heartily supported both. The difference was that he first supported Jefferson, and then fought him; whereas he first fought Calhoun, and then supported him. The man of Monticello was far too heavy a weight for Randolph to handle; but he could, and he did, bend Calhoun to his way of thinking.

Therefore his place in history is much more significant than that of a mere coiner of epigrams, although it is in the epigrams that the world delights today. After all, it is a practical world with no time to waste on exploded theories or defeated policies.

The statesman whose statecraft proved to be mistaken engages as little attention as the beaten racehorse described in one of Randolph's letters:

> "Desdemona, that jewel which thousands were sacrificed to obtain, is now of as little worth as her biped namesake, after the frantic Moor had wrecked his jealous fury on her fair form."

So, even if it were indisputable that Randolph's was the most powerful single influence in transforming the South from the nourishing mother of the republic into the frantic opponent of the republic, still the interest attaching to him on that account would be largely academic, a historical interest, intimately affecting few members of this generation.

But, while governments and statesmen rise and fall, and policies shift with kaleidoscopic speed, mankind remains in essentials pretty much as it was when Achilles sulked in his tent and the whole program of the Agamemnon administration went to pot because he was not on hand to break the assaults of the opposition. From that day to this, men have delighted in a tale of a strong man contending with destiny, no matter what the setting, no matter what

the time. Nor have defeat and victory much to do with fixing that interest, although the man who goes down is, if anything, more interesting than the one who wins. After all, not many of us have tasted the intoxicating draught of victory, but who has not drained the dregs of defeat?

John Randolph of Roanoke was a strong man, and he contended mightily. His human opponents were impressive enough, for he dared the wrath successively of Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Marshall, John C. Calhoun, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster and Andrew Jackson. He was admittedly the first orator in a Congress that included Webster, Clay and Calhoun. His malice was more feared than that of John Quincy Adams. His violence was greater than that of Andrew Jackson. He asked no quarter of the best of them, and no weak man could have stood a moment against the least of these.

But his human foes were inconsiderable by comparison with the intangible opponents that circumstances and his own temperament raised up against him. These were they who bore him down and broke him in the end. He was buried, not facing the east,

as was customary, but facing the west, and men said that it was in order that he might keep an eye on Henry Clay, even after death. Yet it was not Clay whom he had to fear, but enemies within his own breast; and against them all his powers, and all his ingenuity, were of no avail.

He often referred to "my unprosperous life—the fruit of an ungovernable temper," but that merely arouses speculation as to what made his temper ungovernable; and this speculation leads at once into an intricate and sombre drama. No one influence can be isolated and held up as the cause of the ruin of John Randolph, for he was, like the warriors of the Old Testament, a mighty man of valor, more than strong enough to snap a strand that might have bound a weakling. Rather was he, like Gulliver, held down by innumerable threads. Domestic misfortune alone could never have broken him, or physical affliction alone, or betrayal, or grief, or pain of body, or anguish of spirit, or defeated ambition, or fear of doom for his country and for himself. But all these together carried him down.

Certain of the elements of greatness John Randolph of Roanoke possessed beyond the shadow of

a doubt. In intellectual keenness and alertness, he rivalled the great Virginians; in courage no man among them surpassed him, and not all were his equals; in depth of learning he was superior to most of them, perhaps to all; in personal integrity not Washington himself was further beyond reproach. In addition Randolph possessed a quality which none of the stars in Virginia's political firmament shared in anything like the same degree. This quality was his sheen, his coruscation, his sheer, blinding brilliance.

But for all this, he was a man attended by fatality, the heir of the House of Usher. Born to the purple, wealthy, a handsome youth, charming in his personal relations, and equipped with a magnificent mind, it seemed upon his entrance into public life that all the beneficent powers had combined to insure his happiness and his glory. But his fair prospects were all illusory. Instead of primroses, his path was strewn with stones and thorns. Instead of taking his place among the giant Virginians who had preceded him, he heard many voices echoing Tristam Burges' bitter taunt that he was "hated of men and scorned by women." Instead of becoming even the stepfather

of his country, "I mean the Commonwealth of Virginia," he urged her along a road strikingly similar to the one he trod, and which led not to glory everlasting, but to defeat, madness and death.

But somehow he cannot be forgotten. Men remember, if only to curse him. After he had been dead half a century a member of the house of Adams, which he had galled so sorely, enshrined him in a biography which divides one's emotions between admiration of its brilliance and stupefaction at its cold devilry. But if Henry Adams, in memory of his grandfather, hated Randolph piously, the Virginian's own people have remembered him with a curious mixture of terror, pride and wild delight. For, dark as is his story, on occasion it glitters and sparkles as does that of no other man of his generation, indeed, of no other American of any generation. It is the story of a fighting man of the breed of Roland, and no one who is stirred by a tale of a warrior who lays about him with a right good will can fail to be stirred by Randolph. But it is above all else a fantastic tale, frequently verging upon the grotesque. The incredibly long, incredibly lean figure was Don Quixote to the life; but John Randolph's own were

the glittering eyes, and the almost fabulous forefinger with which he seemed to transfix a shivering opponent. For this reason, even more than on account of the tremendous passions which he aroused, it has been difficult in the extreme for the generations which have succeeded his to descry the man under the mime. Yet a man there was, a man of magnificent potentialities, a man who suffered and strove, who aspired greatly, and who achieved no mean triumphs. If he was frequently a mistaken man, he paid heavily for his own mistakes; and he was a man capable of hurling all that he had and all that he was into the fight for a cause in which he believed.

In one of his aphorisms he touched greatness. "Life," he said, "is not as important as the duties of life."

Because he believed this sincerely enough to act upon it, he commands respect. Because he could forget himself utterly, he cannot be utterly forgotten.

CHAPTER II

He Increases in Wisdom and in Stature

CHAPTER II

He Increases in Wisdom and in Stature

HE was born at Cawsons, where the Appomattox River runs into the James, June 2, 1773. He lived at Matoax and Bizarre in his youth, and when he was a man settled at Roanoke. These were not towns, nor even postoffices, but such baronial estates as then dotted Virginia, particularly the eastern half of the state. Each gentleman's estate bore a name, as the English manors on which they were modeled do to this day; for each Virginia gentleman was more than merely an individual citizen, more than the head of an ordinary family. He was the chief man of a community that always included dozens, or scores, and sometimes hundreds of people. In addition to his immediate family there were usually attached to the place some white men as stewards, overseers and, occasionally, tenants, with their families; and then there were the negro slaves.

Therefore to say that John Randolph was born at

Cawsons is to do more than give the geographical site. To the student of Virginia history it gives a clue to his whole environment, for out of these manor houses came men of a definite, recognizable type. Many Virginia houses bore names which have come down through history gathering a host of associations, until one may evoke the mental image of a whole epoch merely by reciting them—Brandon, Westover and Mount Vernon; Shirley, Stratford and Montpelier; Arlington and Monticello.

Colonial Virginia has suffered so much at the hands of sentimentalists of both kinds, the bunking and the debunking, that the truth about it is difficult to apprehend. Certainly it was no such elysium as some idyllic writers would have us believe; but the fact remains that it gave the country, in a single generation, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, James Madison, James Monroe, Patrick Henry, and Peyton and Edmund Randolph, not to mention a host of others whose abilities might have enabled them to achieve the fame of these had the same opportunities been accorded them.

It was a civilization frankly modeled on English country life, and it imitated the faults, as well as

the virtues, of the model. The Virginia gentleman was bred to consider public affairs as his peculiar province. Like the English squire, he had a traditional respect for learning, even if he did not always pursue it in person. Like the Englishman, he acknowledged the responsibility that lies upon a ruling class, and he discharged his duties, on the whole, faithfully. But, once more like the Englishman of the same period, the Virginia gentleman's position made it practicable for him to indulge in all sorts of vice, if he happened to be a man of vicious character. Public opinion was the only effective restraint on the head of a great Virginia house, and even public opinion was not always effective. The brilliance of that society unquestionably masked certain things which would not bear too close examination. There was cruelty under the surface, lust, drunkenness, gambling and murderous outbreaks of passion. Furthermore, it was based on the crumbling foundation of human slavery.

But where is the society in whose depths no foulness lurks? Colonial Virginia is entitled to benefit by the rule which prescribes that societies, like men, shall be judged primarily by the best, not by the

worst, they can do; and with all her faults she remains the most extraordinary nursery of great statesmen that this country has ever seen.

A child born into this society was born to the purple, as far as that is possible in America. John Randolph was born not merely in it, but at the top of it. Cawsons was the home of his mother, who had been Frances Bland, daughter of Theodorick Bland, who was a member of the family that held Westover. His father was John Randolph of Bizarre, member of a clan which by this time interlocked with nearly every prominent family in Virginia, and which traced its ancestry through Pocahontas, the Indian princess who was the friend of Captain John Smith, back to Powhatan, emperor of the Indians. John Randolph and Frances Bland were, in fact, second cousins. Both were descendants of old William Randolph, of Turkey Island, although Frances Bland had none of Powhatan's blood in her veins.

In 1773 the great Virginians of the first group were already men. Washington was forty-one years old, Jefferson was thirty, Madison was twenty-two and Marshall was eighteen. In 1773 Virginia had already borne and nourished her mightiest, and it

was to be thirty-six years ere she was to bear another worthy to take rank with this group, and then only one, Robert, the great Lee. In 1773 the baronial society of Virginia was trembling upon the verge of that upheaval which was to make its continuance in its original form impossible.

So, although the son born to John and Frances Bland Randolph in 1773 was born into the society which was graced by Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Marshall, he was not destined to receive the training which those men had received. To begin with, his father died in 1775; then war swept over the land, and by the time peace was made John Randolph was ten years old, which means that the main tendencies of his character were pretty well established. He was a product of the war and the post-war era. It would be unreasonable to expect to find in him the same qualities that characterized Virginians whose youth was spent in an unhurried, peaceful society, where cultivation of the graces had not to be disregarded in favor of cultivation of the hardihood and endurance of the man-at-arms.

The elder John Randolph left three sons and a considerable estate; the boys' names were Richard,

Theodorick and John. About their father so little is known that it is impossible to assert positively what sort of man he was; but it is equally impossible to omit all mention of three facts, in view of the subsequent career of his youngest son. The first is this: for some reason this Randolph added to the old family motto, *Nil admirari*, a new one of his own choosing, *Fari quæ sentiat* (say what you think); the son certainly lived up to this new motto. The second curious fact is that in his will the father handed down a venomous hatred of a man who apparently had done him no real wrong, but with whom he had quarreled over some matter of a boundary line—fruitful source of feuds in every rural community. The third fact is that in this same will the father expressed the opinion that if his sons' patrimony were expended upon their education to the last shilling, and the boys were well educated, the money would be well spent.

Modern psychologists doubtless would state without hesitation that it is impossible to inherit an unbridled tongue, a notable capacity for hatred, and an insatiable thirst for learning. These things, they assure us, are developed by training, not received in

the germ-plasm. But apparently the elder John Randolph wished to transmit them to his offspring; and in one case it is indisputable that the offspring had them. To his widow, John Randolph left, for life, his estate of Matoax; and there she took up her residence with her three sons.

After three years of widowhood Mrs. Randolph married again. Her second husband was St. George Tucker, a worthy Virginian who apparently did everything in his power to safeguard the interests of his stepchildren. But for the first few years after he assumed the responsibility it was no light task, for shortly after his marriage the war swept down into the South. Howe and Burgoyne between them had wrecked the British northern campaign completely; but a red-faced beefeater was slogging his way north out of Charleston, unsupported with either men or supplies, handicapped by everything a stupid War Office could do to hamstring a general in the field, but nevertheless battering his way up toward Virginia. The gaily confident victor of Saratoga made the mistake of taking red Cornwallis for a fool, and Camden was the catastrophic result. Nathanael Greene somehow pulled the remnants of the shat-

tered army together, but he could not stop Cornwallis. The best he could do was to fall back, fighting. Washington was worried, but he dared not draw away from the vicinity of New York. Greene, with every available man, was contesting the enemy's advance through North Carolina. Between Washington and Greene Virginia lay open to the invader.

In 1781, when John Randolph of Roanoke was seven and a half years old, the invader came, and in the most horrible guise. The British force that suddenly swept into Virginia was, as far as numbers were concerned, a mere raiding party; but its psychological effect was prodigious, because it was commanded by none other than Benedict Arnold, fresh from his treason at West Point. The Americans naturally assumed that there was nothing of which Arnold was not capable, and the panic which his advent spread through the countryside was measureless. The approach of a force commanded by a regular British officer would have been terrifying enough; but a force commanded by Arnold was regarded as a force commanded by the Devil himself. St. George Tucker immediately took steps to remove his family from the path of the invader. They pro-

ceeded to Bizarre, and it was on this occasion that John Randolph of Roanoke was first mounted upon a horse. The imminent danger past, Tucker, a major of militia, joined his battalion with Greene's army in time to serve at the battle of Guilford Court House, and to follow the retreat of the exhausted Cornwallis to Yorktown. There Tucker, now a lieutenant-colonel, was slightly wounded in the last battle of the war.

What an impression must have been made upon the mind of a small boy by all this bustle and confusion! He saw nothing of the actual war, it is true, but he felt the thrills without the anxiety that tortured his elders. The alarm at the approach of the enemy; the sudden appearance on the scene of the gallant major, who must have been a hero indeed in baby eyes, and the immediate sense of safety under the major's guard; the journey; the arrival in a secure asylum; the departure of the major; the reports of a great battle far away, in which the major had taken part, and following that the slow recoil of the enemy, the final thunder of the guns at Yorktown, and the return of the hero, bandaged, but victorious—all this was well designed to light the fire

of the most romantic sort of patriotism in a small boy's breast. The small boy's subsequent career proved that his patriotism was fiery and romantic enough, and this experience may have been its first kindling.

During the stay at Bizarre, which, like Matoax, was one of the Randolph estates, Mrs. Tucker with the children made a visit to still another plantation, one which was inhabited exclusively by negro slaves. It had for the accommodation of the white master on his occasional visits only a rude log cabin, and it was doubtless here that the mother with her three sons found shelter. The name of the place was Roanoke, and it was during this visit, according to Garland, that John Randolph's mother made a remark which he was destined to remember all his life. Taking him up on her horse as she was riding over the estate one day she said,

"Johnny, all this land belongs to you and your brother Theodorick; it is your father's inheritance. When you get to be a man you must not sell your land; it is the first step to ruin for a boy to part with his father's home. Be sure to keep it as long as you live. Keep your land, and your land will keep you."

It was kindly meant, and it seemed sound. John Randolph accepted it without a shadow of doubt, and continued to accept it to the end of his days. But to a Virginian, in 1781, it was poisonous advice. It assumed a condition that did not exist, namely, a stable social order, and therefore it held up a static ideal. It was counsel of conservatism, and in 1781 the call was not for conservatism, but for intelligent pioneering. The future was to belong, not to those Americans who clung stubbornly to their lands, but to those with the foresight and the energy to break new paths, to clear new fields in commerce and industry, to try what had never been tried, to do what had never been done before. But in 1781 in Virginia such ideas would have seemed fantastic to all sound people. Mrs. Tucker was, for her time, a sensible woman, and the wisest men of the day approved the advice she gave her son.

Life at Bizarre had its difficulties. Cornwallis surrendered in October, 1781, but peace was not declared until two years later, and for a long time after the formal peace men were still engaged in clearing up the wreckage of the war. Lieutenant-Colonel Tucker had his hands full, what with the

management of his estate, his duty with his regiment, and the necessity of looking after the physical and mental well-being of his stepchildren. But there is ample evidence that he did not neglect the last-named task. Henry Adams asserts that the boys "ran wild" at Bizarre. They did nothing of the kind. It is true, they could not receive the leisurely cultivation of the mind which had been the part of the elder generation. They were refugees, still living in a war zone, and until the end of 1781 in momentary danger of a raid by enemy cavalry. Nevertheless, Tucker managed to keep a tutor on duty part of the time, and even when no teacher was available lessons went on after a fashion. Bruce has unearthed a letter written July 10, 1781, by John Randolph to his stepfather, which is notable not merely as the first epistle of a great letter-writer, but also as a social document, since it throws a flood of light on the life of the family. It reads:

"*Dear Papa:*

"I take this oppty of letting you know that we are all well and that I missed my ague at Roanoke. Mama and Mrs. Hartston hung up Abracadabra as a charm for that and to keep away the enemy. Sister is worth a dozen of

what she was when you left her. She says anything and runs about all day. I hope you are in favor with the Marquis. I don't doubt it, for I think you a very fine officer and will be able to make the militia fight, for if they do not now I don't think they ever will be collected after running away. Brother Dicky has turned me back from the optitive of *amo* to the potential mood of *audio* because Mr. Hearn never taught me. I thank you my dr papa for telling me in your letter to be a good boy and mind my book. I do love my book and mind it as much as I can myself, but we want a tutor very much. I hope in a month I shall be passing my Concords. I will try all I can to be a good boy and a favourite of Mama's and when you come home I hope I shall be one of yours.

"I am dr papa yr dutyful and affect: son
"John Randolph."

The boy who wrote that at eight years old had not been running wild, he was not undisciplined, his mental training had not been utterly neglected. The modern child of eight who could express himself as well in a country enjoying profound peace, with the advantage of an intricate and gigantic public school system, would be regarded with great and justifiable pride by his parents.

But there is much more in this letter than merely refutation of Adams' ill-founded judgment. In the

first place, there is no small tribute to St. George Tucker in the unmistakably affectionate tone of his stepson's letter. In the second place, it is a delightful exhibition of the working of a small boy's mind—an alert and exceptionally well-trained mind, it may seem to us, but healthily small-boyish. Papa could make the militia fight. Others might fail at that Herculean task, but not he! Papa was in favor with the Marquis. Of course he was; otherwise "dutyful and affect:" John Randolph would have had small opinion of the Marquis de Lafayette. Finally, being turned back from the optitive of *amo* was an event of immense importance, but it is admitted without repining. Brother Dicky had ordered it, because the former tutor had failed in his duty. Mark this, because there is a sequel to follow, a sombre and dreadful sequel: what Brother Dicky did was all right. Brother Dicky was then eleven years old, but in the eyes of eight, he knew more than any tutor. Richard Randolph was already a hero to his younger brother, John.

After Christmas, 1781, the boys were put into a regular school, that of Walker Maury, in Orange County, many miles from Bizarre and Roanoke. It

was probably a bad thing for John at eight years old to be taken away from his mother and his home and be sent two days' journey away from all he had known and loved. But whether John was benefited or damaged, it was certainly a bad thing for Maury, because the child was wretched at his school and retained none but bitter memories of it, which resulted many years later in his perpetuating the fame of the luckless master as "the most peevish and ill-tempered of pedagogues."

After a time the school was removed to Williamsburg, but the removal caused no improvement in John Randolph's opinion of it. Back in Orange County conditions had become bad enough almost to induce Brother Dicky to desert and go home; and this manifestation on the part of the big brother was remembered and mentioned in a letter by the smaller one thirty years later. But at Williamsburg John Randolph made at least one fortunate contact. It was there he became acquainted with another boy who bore the formidable name of Littleton Waller Tazewell, a name remembered now only by historians and Virginia genealogists, but which was lustrous in Randolph's day. This Tazewell has, however, a pe-

culiar claim to fame over and above the feats of becoming one of the greatest of Virginia lawyers and a powerful member of the United States Senate—he established a friendship with John Randolph of Roanoke that lasted through life. All things considered, this is probably the most wonderful thing he ever did; for men who could retain John Randolph's esteem were rare indeed.

Yet if Walker Maury left unpleasant memories in his pupils' heads, that is not all he left there. For all his rigidity of discipline, he managed to impart some knowledge, albeit mainly by the process of beating it in. Obviously, he was a wretched teacher, but not wholly inefficient. Tazewell's memory held the impression that John Randolph was idle at school and was flogged regularly every Monday morning and frequently two or three times during the week. The impression of idleness is pretty sure to have been derived from the teacher; yet this boy, before he was eleven years old, had read Voltaire's *Charles XII*, the *Spectator*, *Humphrey Clinker*, *Reynard the Fox*, *The Arabian Nights*, the plays of Shakespeare, *Don Quixote*, *Gil Blas*, *Quintus Curtius*, Plutarch, Pope's *Homer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Or-*

lando Furioso, Thomson's *Seasons* and Goldsmith's two-volume *Roman History*. The schoolmaster who would take such a boy for an idler must have been in some respects an imbecile himself. Throughout his life, indeed, Randolph displayed an insatiable thirst for learning. Had it been his fortune as a boy to come under a schoolmaster of first-rate ability, one who knew boys as well as books, the whole course of his life might have been changed. But Randolph never had any luck. An evil genius presided at his birth, and misfortune dogged his steps from the cradle to the grave. It was in accord with his whole career that his first schoolmaster should have been an appalling tyrant, whose memory he hated all his days.

But Brother Dicky was there, the shining hero of his childish heart. And Tazewell was there—not a marker in wisdom, virtue and physical prowess to the big brother, of course, but a boon companion and beloved playfellow, at that. And little by little, between floggings, the boy absorbed a good deal of Latin, a little Greek, a little French and a little geometry. Indeed, Walker Maury's school bore the reputation of being one of the best in the South, and included at one time more than a hundred boys from

many states. It was in some sense a preparatory school for the College of William and Mary; and its effect upon a peculiarly sensitive boy is not so much indicative of unusual brutality on the part of Walker Maury, as illustrative of the brutality of all the pedagogy of the times.

In 1784, however, John Randolph was delivered from his hated master. His health, as well as his temper, was so obviously suffering under the Maury regimen that his mother determined to send him to a softer climate. He was therefore dispatched to Bermuda, where his stepfather had been born, and remained for more than a year in the house of St. George Tucker's father.

On leaving Williamsburg he exchanged copies of Sallust, the text which the class was then reading, with Tazewell, and on the fly-leaf wrote a Latin inscription: *Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.* There was a sardonic appropriateness in it which he could not suspect. Even at eleven, the trend of his inner life was probably fixed; and thereafter, though he roamed the wide world over, he could not get away from himself.

CHAPTER III

He Frequents Doctor and Sage

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THE stay in Bermuda was, on the whole, a pleasant one, to judge by its surviving records. Among other advantages it included instruction by a tutor, Ewing, whom Randolph liked and respected. Unfortunately, though, Ewing did not teach Greek, and Randolph lost his slight acquaintance with that language—a loss to which, in later life, he attached an importance which it probably did not merit. He did, however, find in the house of Mr. Tucker many English classics, which he read then for the first time. Apparently Bermuda was good for his health, also, for when his mother came over, in 1785, with her other children—she had borne two sons and a daughter to St. George Tucker—she found him sufficiently improved to be taken back to Virginia in November. The return voyage was a wretched one; to it Randolph attributed the beginning of the illness that cost his mother's life two years later.

Back to Virginia was back to Williamsburg and Maury, back to a regimen more hateful than ever, now, because it was not mollified by the presence of the big brother, for Richard had been transferred to the college, and Theodorick and John were left to contend with the detested schoolmaster as best they could. They made heavier and heavier weather of it until finally Theodorick threw up the sponge and bolted. Shortly afterward John, too, left the school, probably without the advice and consent of his parents, for his mother had already gone to New York for her health, and Judge Tucker had always been a partisan of his old schoolmate, Maury. However, he seems to have made no attempt, this time, to send the boys back, and after some months at home Theodorick and John were sent to Princeton.

But this change was no improvement, for John hated the place. He was placed at first in the Grammar School, but after a few months was transferred to the college, then headed by the famous Dr. Witherspoon. Against this man, regarded now by common consent as one of the most eminent academic figures in American history, John Randolph brought the astonishing charge of embezzling his pocket money!

It is an assertion so grotesque that biographers for many years either ignored it, as Garland did, or cited it as one more proof of Randolph's essential malignity, as Adams did. But Bruce, with his accustomed thoroughness, probed this until he found an explanation of it, if not an excuse for it. In a letter from Theodorick Randolph to St. George Tucker, dated January 18, 1790, Theodorick states that he had recently seen Dr. Witherspoon and mentioned the matter of a settlement, which Tucker had applied for by letter, but in vain. Whereupon the Doctor said he had received no such letter, but that he held a balance due the Randolph estate and which he stood ready to pay over on St. George Tucker's order. Since the Randolphs had left Princeton in 1787, it does seem evident that Dr. Witherspoon was guilty of woefully negligent business practices. This is certainly no adequate ground on which to base a charge of embezzlement, but building a mountain of villainy out of a molehill of negligence was one of John Randolph's specialties.

At Christmas Theodorick and John went to New York for the holidays, but the trip was cut short by news of Mrs. Tucker's mortal illness. Her death,

early in 1788, was the boy's second great misfortune. She was the only person in the world who both understood and sympathized with him. In the schools Randolph had encountered little enough of understanding; and that misfortune unquestionably had twisted his character out of true. His mother, apparently, had always been a stabilizing influence in his life. She was a woman of strong common sense, and no man needed more than John Randolph the guidance of a well-poised intelligence. His mother could guide him, for he adored her; and in the circle of his acquaintance there was no other whom he regarded with such affection and who was equally competent to straighten and steady him.

But she was dead in 1788, and immediately there began to appear conspicuously in Randolph's life that errancy, inconstancy and lack of fixed purpose which were to become its hallmark and its tragedy. In May, 1788, he and Theodorick went to Columbia college in New York, and at last discovered a genuine teacher in Cochrane, the Professor of Humanity. John fairly flung himself on this man and rushed into his studies, particularly Greek. For the moment it appeared that he might at last find the road-

way into the Republic of Letters a broad and inviting path. But again the event proved that John Randolph had no luck. Only a few months after the Virginia boy's arrival at Columbia, Cochrane accepted a call to Nova Scotia. The rest of the faculty Randolph found uninspiring, dull fellows, and he had not enough fixity of purpose within himself to do much without a good teacher. So he proceeded to get drunk.

The blame for this he lays at Theodorick's door, probably not altogether without cause, for Theo, as John called him, was traveling at a pretty swift pace. Theo apparently had given up education as a bad job back at Walker Maury's school, and had not troubled himself much about it since. From the letters of his that have survived, it is hard to believe that Theo was altogether a bad lot. On the contrary, he seems to have been a youth with a boundless store of affection, rather good-natured and full of fun. Like John, he admired Brother Dicky hugely, and he seems to have been full of affectionate respect for his stepfather. But there was not much weight to Theo. Finding New York somewhat too drab to suit his fancy, he proceeded to paint it red, and one of his

favorite amusements, when in an exuberant mood, was to invade John's room with a group of his boon companions, heave his books out of the window, and drag him off to join the revelry.

Nevertheless, he stuck to Columbia for about two years. Richard, who had been at the college for a while, left earlier, and the last day of 1789 he was married to Judith Randolph, a cousin. The next summer Theo and John left New York for Virginia, Theo, according to his brother, in bad physical condition from his excesses.

But if John Randolph's formal education in New York was no brilliant success, merely being in New York at that time was a form of education in itself. As he himself put it, "I had seen the old Congress expire and the new government rise like a Phœnix from its ashes. I saw the coronation (such in fact it was) of Gen. Washington in March, 1789, and heard Ames and Madison, when they first took their seats in the House of Representatives." Now he was to follow the government to its new seat, as a student of the law in the office of Edmund Randolph, just appointed the first Attorney-General of the United States. Edmund Randolph was a resident of Wil-

liamsburg, whither St. George Tucker had removed from Matoax after the death of his wife; and Edmund proposed that his young cousin should study in his office.

But, according to John, "Congress met in Philadelphia, and Edm. R. was too much engrossed by politics and his own receptions to think of me. He, too, embezzled my funds which Mr. T. entrusted to him for my use. Had they been faithfully applied, they were adequate to my decent support (only $400 per annum). For what cause I know not Mr. Randolph put into my hands, by way of preparation for the work of law, Hume's Metaphysical works. I had a great propensity for that sort of reading."

Again John Randolph was, in his own estimation, the victim of a thief in a high place, and this time there is no supporting evidence even to indicate that Edmund Randolph was negligent, as Dr. Witherspoon was. The statement lends color to Moncure D. Conway's theory that John Randolph hated everyone who tried to teach him anything. But he did not hate Ewing, the Bermudian, and he did not hate Cochrane, of Columbia. The truth seems to be that he instinctively hated bad teachers, and for a

supersensitive, highstrung youth even Witherspoon was a bad teacher, while Edmund Randolph was almost fabulously bad. For he followed Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* with Shakespeare, then Beattie on *Truth*, Kames' *Elements of Criticism* and Gillies' *History of Greece*. "What an admirable system of study!" Randolph wrote sarcastically, years later. "What a complete course of metaphysics! *Risum teneatis?*" (Can you restrain your laughter?)

But to assume that young Randolph learned nothing in the establishment of his distinguished kinsman would be, as in the case of his New York experience, to go far afield. Even from his reading he learned much, possibly all too much. He learned how to spin out a metaphysical argument to the fineness of a hair, without breaking the thread. Hume and Beattie may very well have taught him how the speculative mind is able to proceed with great plausibility and apparently with certitude from concept to concept, through syllogism after syllogism, until it reaches a plane of thought so far removed from reality that it bears no perceptible relation whatever to reality. "I had a great propen-

sity for that sort of reading"—unluckily, he had a great propensity for that sort of thinking, too.

Then Shakespeare, and Gillies on the history of Greece—in a sense, a liberal education in themselves, no doubt. But Shakespeare is a whole world, in which the individual reader may find almost anything he seeks; and into the history of Greece one may easily read his own prejudices and preconceptions. Certainly John Randolph learned a great deal from Shakespeare, but evidently more of his technique than of his spirit. Where could he have learned better the value of the lightning-like metaphor that illumines a whole landscape in a flash, or the beauty of the balanced, melodious line, or the strength of sturdy, old English monosyllables? All these he did learn to employ with a dexterity not altogether unworthy of the Olympian himself; why should he not have gleaned so much from William Shakespeare?

And as for the Greeks, well, he was already enamored of oratory. He had sat spellbound at the feet of Patrick Henry; a little later he was to be enthralled by reading the eloquence of Edmund Burke. Would he pass by Demosthenes lightly? Would he fail to note the tremendous effectiveness

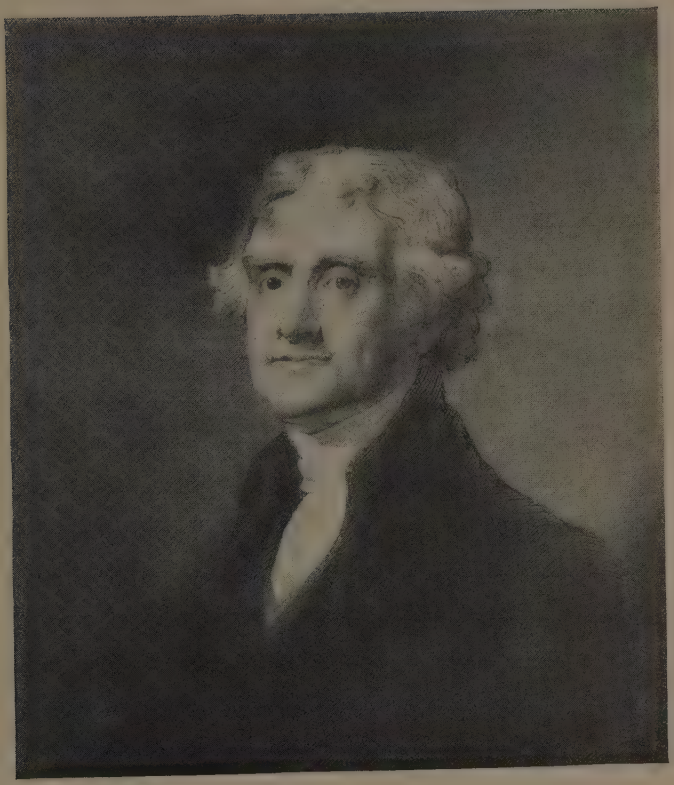
of oratory in Athens, or to mark the similarity in his own environment to that in which the Demagogues ruled a nation with their tongues? Oh, he got something out of Gillies, without a doubt.

But William Shakespeare read the hearts and minds of men with as much accuracy as John Randolph read an open book. In his most tremendous flights of fancy, William Shakespeare was never carried quite out of himself. Always, alongside the impassioned poet, there stood a cool skeptic, with his eternal question, with his everlasting doubt; and with a lift of the eyebrows he could bring the poet instantly back to the solid earth. And in the history of Greece, Time took the place of this skeptic. Here was eloquence flaming as eloquence never flamed before, here were orators who could mould the passions of men as a potter his clay. Yet what came of it all but ashes and shards? Eloquence could inflame the minds of the Greeks, but the Macedonian phalanx was reality. There is every reason to believe, however, that it was the eloquence, not the phalanx, that fascinated Randolph in the history of Greece, as it was the poet, not the skeptic, that fascinated him in Shakespeare.

Nor was his instruction in Philadelphia confined to books. Indeed, as he perceived clearly in later years, from books he took only an inconsiderable part of it. The Attorney-General was not his only kinsman in a high place. He had another cousin in the Cabinet, no less an official than the Secretary of State, a long, rangy, red-headed mountaineer who bore the name, already illustrious, of Thomas Jefferson. He had lately returned from France where, as American minister, he had witnessed events that had stirred his blood and fired his imagination. The French people were in wild revolt, not merely against a political system, but against the whole existing social order. Jefferson's superb intelligence foresaw instantly the tremendous implications of the revolt, foresaw them long before many people in France, not to mention the rest of the world, had begun to realize them. But his perniciously sanguine temperament colored the vision until he began to see in the French Revolution the beginning of a new heaven and a new earth.

Back to Philadelphia, then, came the mightiest dreamer of his time, filled with this new vision; and, needless to say, he talked of it in the house of his

kinsman and colleague, Edmund Randolph. And when Thomas Jefferson talked to his intimate friends, he was irresistible. He had no flair for oratory. He had written the Declaration of Independence, and he was constantly writing wonderful letters, but he could not, or would not, write a newspaper article. Conversation was his *métier*. How the man could talk! Possibly his very bashfulness in the presence of a great audience added to his charm in a small group of intimates. At any rate, his whole generation attests that when he sat at a dinner-table, or in a drawing-room, or before the fire in some gentleman's library, he might, had he chosen, have persuaded his companions that white is black, that the sun rises in the west, and that the moon is veritably made of green cheese. Why, he could talk George Washington into taking action repugnant to all his aristocratic instincts. More—he could actually talk Alexander Hamilton into petulant silence, strongly as Hamilton believed that the talk was all buncombe. By this personal charm, and persuasive argument, and not at all by thundering denunciation and wild campaigning, he was to destroy, a few years later, not merely an administration, but an entire



"St. Thomas of Cantingbury"
(PORTRAIT OF THOMAS JEFFERSON BY GILBERT STUART)

political party, and set up a régime which should rule the country, with unimportant interruptions, for half a century.

Is it imaginable that a boy of seventeen, subjected at close range to this prodigious influence, should have withstood it for an instant? Certainly John Randolph did not. Jefferson swept him into his following without a moment's resistance. Not that Randolph ever thought of resisting. Why should he? Was not this magnetic philosopher also of the blood, a Virginian of the Virginians? Was he not accepted as a rightful leader by all the kith and kin of the Randolphs? True, he had been regarded rather dubiously by the reverend fathers of the church ever since he had written the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom; but clerical doubts and tremors have ever been of slight effect upon the enthusiasms of Seventeen.

And aside from all this, why should we deny John Randolph his due meed of intelligence? He was incorrigibly romantic. He accepted gravely all manner of hollow fustian in the romantic style. His mentality in later life was warped and twisted until it broke down altogether more than once. But he never

was a complete idiot. He undervalued many excellent men, and he occasionally overvalued a cheap one. However, if he had failed, even at seventeen, to see in Thomas Jefferson a great man, he would have been so blind spiritually as to be something of a monstrosity. More than that, he never lost altogether this first impression of greatness. In later years he abused Jefferson virulently, and in dubbing him "St. Thomas of Cantingbury" he achieved one of his uncanny triumphs in masterly abuse; but at the bottom of his heart he always knew that this man was a giant. Therefore, if he followed Jefferson unresistingly, it is more than probable that he did it in part for the very solid reason that he recognized in Jefferson a leader worth following.

But not all of John Randolph's education in Philadelphia was gained from Edmund Randolph's strangely assorted books, and from the debates in Congress, and from the intimate conversation of the great men who frequented the house. During his two or three years' residence in the city he learned many things that are not taught to young gentlemen in school. The pious Garland, indeed, declares, "He passed through that critical period of life without

the contamination of a single vice"; but Garland would have come closer to the truth had he said that Randolph passed without missing a single vice which gentlemen of the period indulged. Indeed, were we to accept at full value his own account, John slashed a crimson streak across Philadelphia which made Theo's similar effort in New York fade to a pale pink. But it is not unheard-of for age, counselling youth against excess, to touch up its own experiences with vivid colors not altogether justified by the facts; nor is youth reporting to youth always inclined to a modest drabness. John Randolph did write to a youth of about the same age at this time:

> "After having led a life of dissipation for the last three months, I soon found that Ignorance and Vice were the unerring attendants of what is the surest road to Infamy and Guilt. It is impossible, my dear Henry, to conceive in what manner a life of debauchery destroys the finer feelings of the mind and repels those virtuous emotions which alone, as you have observed, render us superior to the brutes of the creation."

Portentous, indeed. Taken literally, it is a comment worthy of a second Caligula, or at least of a Marquis de Sade. But when one takes into considera-

tion the fact that the writer was less than nineteen years old, the sinister effect fades somewhat, that is, if one has himself been nineteen some years ago and is able to remember the prodigious solemnity of nineteen; and when one adds to this the consideration that it was written to another boy of about the same age, Caligula vanishes out of the picture.

However, John Randolph was far enough from being the model Sunday School scholar of Garland's fancy. Bruce has uncovered a letter written by St. George Tucker in which he remits $268 to settle John's gambling debts, and in 1791 that was relatively a much larger sum than it would be today. It is a situation about which reliable information is impossible to secure after nearly a hundred and forty years; but such evidence as exists points to the conclusion that during these years John drank considerably more than was good for him and lost more bets than even a well-to-do young Virginian could conveniently afford. Furthermore, there seems to have been an unfortunate love affair at some time during this period. This is the most obscure episode of all, but there is a deep-rooted tradition that the lady's father interfered, and Bruce is satisfied that the in-

terference was based on some of young Randolph's scandalous goings-on around town of nights.

All this is bad enough, to be sure, but certainly nothing unprecedented. Plenty of men have done worse and yet escaped "the surest road that leads to Infamy and Guilt" in capital letters. It all leads to the conclusion that up to the beginning of 1792 there was nothing especially curious about John Randolph. The worst that could have been said of him at this time was that he was a hearty young hellion, without any fixed purpose in life, and rapidly acquiring a comprehensive collection of bad habits.

On the other hand, the best that could have been said of him was that he was a high-spirited youth, with a marvelously quick and active intelligence and a memory that had soaked up like a sponge an astounding assortment of unrelated information. He attended lectures with friends among the medical students, and picked up some of their strange jargon. He could declaim in Latin and Greek. In addition, although he surrendered to the Gallomania of the time, and dated letters "19 Florial" and "5 Messidor," the sonorous music of Edmund Burke had already charmed him, and he was well indoctrinated

with the political philosophy of that great conservative.

Furthermore, his was still a reasonably happy world. He yet maintained a respectful affection for St. George Tucker, his stepfather, and his guardian since he had been completely orphaned. Brother Dicky was still his stainless knight, and poor Theo, now near the end of his days, was held in high esteem. Apparently he was a fairly normal boy, pretty sick of the city, no doubt, and depressed by the consciousness that he had played the fool a large part of the time he spent in Philadelphia, but certainly not an embittered man, certainly no Ishmaelite.

However, the clouds were already gathering; indeed, they were piled high above his unconscious head. In February, 1792, Theo died, and this mournful news deepened John's profound dissatisfaction with Philadelphia and his way of life there. By July, he had decided to go back to Virginia. Years afterward he explained that he went for lack of funds to remain in the city, but more likely it was for lack of desire to remain there. The tinge of bitterness was not yet perceptible, but already life was somewhat flat upon John Randolph's tongue. Theo was dead,

and he had been going the way of Theo. Edmund Randolph was not a good teacher, and the last man in the world to inspire a boy with a fixed, unalterable purpose in life. "Friend Edmund," said John, years later, "was like the chameleon on the aspen, ever trembling, ever changing."

Why not abandon it all, then, and go back to Virginia, back to Bizarre, where Brother Dicky lived the good life? Back to Bizarre, and the horses and the dogs, where gentlemen lived in peace and honor —why not go back to fulfill the destiny of a Randolph on the family estate?

John Randolph started in July, 1792.

CHAPTER IV

He Is Smitten of God and Afflicted

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He Is Smitten of God and Afflicted

HE proceeded as far as Richmond without incident, but there calamity overtook him. We know nothing of the details. The only record of the occurrence, in fact, is a line or two in a letter written to Tudor Randolph, John's nephew, more than twenty years later: "In this town, on my way to Williamsburg, I was taken with scarlet fever and brought to the brink of the grave. So few charms had life for me, so strong was the disgust that I had taken to the world that I was indifferent to the issue of my disease."

None of the biographers of Randolph has paid much attention to this incident, which is not strange, in view of the meagreness of the record. Yet it is quite possible that upon this point the whole career of John Randolph hinged. The truth cannot be established at this late date. One can only balance probabilities. But the known facts make it easy to believe

that this illness played a major part in fixing the destiny of the victim. Up to this time there is nothing in the record which indicates that Randolph was anything other than a normal youth, possibly somewhat under-developed for nineteen, but certainly in no wise set apart from other men. A few years after this time it was widely known in Virginia that he was impotent and, as Bruce has shown, the fact was established by medical testimony after his death.

Garland assumed the view generally accepted by Randolph's contemporaries, that it was a congenital defect. But Bruce has uncovered a mass of evidence tending to show that it was not, and therefore inclines to the view that the affliction was the result of accident or disease occurring after Randolph's Philadelphia residence. If that is true, however, it must have occurred very soon afterward, for the testimony is almost unanimous that Randolph to the end of his days was almost beardless, and that his voice was high-pitched and shrill. Nineteen is a late, but not an unheard-of, age for a boy's beard to appear and for his voice to deepen.

Falta, of Vienna, in his work on glandular diseases, declares that the condition which he describes

as the "eunochoid" is not necessarily congenital, and that if it is acquired before the end of adolescence, it tends to arrest the development of the secondary sexual characteristics. Victims sometimes grow to unusual height, he adds, and the extremities, in particular, are likely to attain notable size. John Randolph's height, and his amazingly long, lean forefinger, which he used to shake in an opponent's face, have been remembered for a hundred years. Finally, Falta names as one of the possible causes of this abnormality an unusually severe attack of scarlet fever.

At any rate, it is highly improbable that John Randolph's disability began at a much later date, for two reasons. First, he retained permanently a curiously boyish appearance. When he was over forty a spectator in the House gallery was dumfounded at learning that the skinny youth he saw on the floor, and whom he had believed to be about sixteen, was the great Mr. Randolph of Virginia. Second, Randolph was always eloquent on the subject of his aches and pains, but nowhere does he record an attack meeting the conditions which Falta defines as essential to the creation of this affliction, that is, a

severe attack of an infectious disease involving very high temperatures. Had he suffered such an illness it is impossible to believe that he would have failed to mention it.

Therefore it seems probable that when John Randolph at last was able to continue his journey, he crawled back to Bizarre already doomed to be the last of his line. It is impossible to say when he realized it. But it is equally impossible to mistake the effect upon such a temperament of the realization when it did arrive. Here was an intensely proud member of a proud race, a man who cherished his lineage above all his material possessions, a man to whom the family was not merely a sacred, but a downright awe-inspiring institution, deprived of the privilege of continuing his family. Here was a scornful man doomed forever to be the target of the shafts of the scornful. Here was a romantic man ridiculously debarred from amorous romance. Here was a man whose finest quality, perhaps, was his capacity for unflagging devotion to the domestic interests of his kin, denied the possibility of setting up a domestic establishment of his own. It is inconceivable that this frustration, this profound humilia-

tion should have failed to work out in bitterness of spirit.

In later years all the world knew that John Randolph was charged with lightning. Again and again some relatively inoffensive man, by a single incautious touch, released a thunderbolt that fairly charred him to a cinder, to his own amazement and that of all beholders. Men wondered at the extreme disparity between provocation and retaliation in such cases. But the House of Representatives had no time for careful psychological analyses; so members set down the Virginian's inexplicable reactions to original sin, or demoniacal possession, or some other more or less theological and metaphysical explanation, and let it go at that. They walked wide of Randolph without pretending to understand him. Indeed, they had not the information on which to base intelligent understanding of this human enigma; but today, with the immense advantage of hindsight, it is not difficult to comprehend many of his acts which were, to his contemporaries, totally incomprehensible. Unquestionably one sharp point that rasped and rowelled his mind until it found vent for its suffering in furious and apparently un-

provoked assaults on bystanders was this physical disability. Another, and a worse one, was about to be added.

John Randolph was back at Bizarre now, and relatively at peace under the hospitable roof of Brother Dicky. The word "relatively" is used advisedly, for there are tales of a strange unrest which possessed him even there. Already he had grown moody and unsettled, and the reports tell of curious nocturnal ramblings, of sudden startings from bed in the small hours of the morning, a hasty buckling on of pistols and pulling on of boots, an inexplicable mounting to the saddle for a ride which should last until dawn. Above all, there are his own reports in his diary of tremendous journeys on horseback. Theoretically, he lived at Bizarre, but apparently he customarily arrived there only to start away again. Randolph was a wonderful horseman and loved to be in the saddle; but no love of horseflesh is sufficient alone to account for the way he quartered back and forth over almost all Virginia during the summer and early autumn of 1792. Only a perturbed spirit could have given rise to such incessant wanderings.

Nevertheless, he had in Bizarre a point of support

for more than his physical frame in these unquiet days. His childhood hero-worship of Brother Dicky had doubtless been somewhat tempered as he drew on toward manhood, but even yet Richard Randolph was in the eyes of his brother, John, something like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Nor was this view of Richard confined to John alone. Bruce and Garland have assembled evidence to show that many others regarded him as the hope and stay of the Randolphs. Some of his contemporaries, indeed, believed to the end of their days that his was the finest mind in the family, and that had his life been spared he would have outshone his brother and been remembered in history as *The* Randolph.

Any such estimate as that is, of course, to be accepted with caution, in view of the natural human tendency to find in a great man's brother, especially a brother who died young, qualities superior to those of the more celebrated man. But waiving all hearsay evidence and estimates based on contemporary impressions, the established, indisputable facts about Richard Randolph go far to justify his brother's admiration and affection. His will, for example, is an extraordinarily interesting document. In it he freed

his Negroes and set aside an estate for their support; and the reasons he set down for this act constitute an attack on the institution of human slavery as ferocious as the best effort of any Northern abolitionist, and far better aimed than were most of the abolitionist attacks. It is evidence at once of the testator's clear sight, since he could not be blinded to the essential truth either by his own interest or by the specious arguments which his neighbors accepted readily, and also to his warm heart, since the wrong suffered by an alien race was able to move him to hot indignation.

But beyond that, his house had become a sort of asylum for the oppressed among his own kindred. His wife, who was also a Randolph, had a sister, Ann Cary Randolph, better known as Nancy Randolph, who had made Richard's house her home for some time prior to 1792. Why she left her own people is obscure, but good-natured Richard took her in readily enough. Furthermore, there was a cousin, Mrs. Dudley, a widow who had fallen upon evil days; and when he heard of it, Richard sent for her and her whole family, and kept them until times were better.

It is clear enough that Richard, at twenty-two, was already the head of the house in the most literal sense, the member of the family on whom all the others relied, the steady, sturdy type which assumes responsibility and is granted authority without question. To mercurial John it was inevitable that Richard should seem the hope and pride of the Randolphs. Indeed, as far as the race was concerned he was the only hope, for, from the dynastic standpoint, Theo was dead and John was damned, and Richard, only, remained. This was, however, an important exception, for in the summer of 1792, all the auguries seemed to promise Richard a long, honorable and prosperous career in the best traditions of the Virginia gentry. His landed estate was a great one, and exceptionally productive. He was happily married. His social position was most enviable. He had the respect of all men not only because of his name and his position as a great Virginia planter, but because of his own solid worth, as men esteemed it in that summer of 1792. With the general estimate John Randolph agreed happily, for his love for and trust in Brother Dicky were one phase of his life that had never been clouded.

The summer wore away and autumn came. John Randolph had recovered enough physical vigor to be almost constantly in the saddle, to say nothing of terrifying the good Mrs. Dudley with his nocturnal forays with loaded pistols and his habit sometimes, when insomnia gripped him, of pacing up and down his room nearly all night, exclaiming, "Macbeth hath murdered sleep! Macbeth hath murdered sleep!" The first of October came, and he was apparently at Bizarre alone, for Mr. and Mrs. Richard Randolph, with Nancy and two or three others, were that night at Glenlyvar, home of Randolph Harrison, some miles away. A little later John Randolph mounted again and rode away toward Williamsburg, seemingly with no definite object in view, other than the desire to seek the society of friends. Somewhere on this journey he encountered one who had been his intimate from childhood, Robert Banister, and this friend told him news that was indeed poison in his ears. A terrific scandal had broken at Glenlyvar the night of October 1st, and already all Virginia was ringing with it. It involved Nancy Randolph and his brother Richard. The gist of it was that these two had attempted to conceal adultery by adding to it,

on this night in Randolph Harrison's house, the crime of infanticide. The story the gossips told was that the physical strain which the journey imposed upon Nancy had precipitated a crisis, and that her paramour had not stopped at murder in his efforts to conceal the facts.

To his brother, as to all the world, Richard denied it. Judith, his wife, denied it, although she had been present at Glenlyvar that night. Randolph Harrison, master of the house, denied any knowledge of it. Nevertheless, the scandal spread and increased to such tremendous proportions that, in the spring of 1793, Richard Randolph was indicted and brought to trial for murder. John stood by, and did all that a brother could. Patrick Henry was retained as counsel for the defense, and had associated with him John Marshall, later Chief Justice of the United States, and Alexander Campbell, then a leader of the Virginia bar. John Randolph was put on the stand, but his testimony amounted to little. He admitted that Nancy had been in low spirits for some time, but was able to offer a reasonable explanation of that in the death of his brother, Theodorick, who had confessed in Philadelphia that he was engaged to marry

Nancy. For the rest, his testimony was largely concerned with the excellent relations in the household at Bizarre, especially as between Judith and Nancy.

But, as the event proved, testimony for the defense was not needed, for the prosecution failed to make out a case. Randolph Harrison, put on the stand, could swear without perjury that he knew nothing. The prosecution proved that this model of discretion had taken very good care not to know anything. Hearing some disturbance among his guests that night, he had proffered his assistance; but when it was declined, he and his wife had retired to their own quarters and remained there. In the days that followed, when ugly rumors came to his ears, he had carefully refrained from investigating them until it was too late to discover anything. Randolph Harrison had attended to his own business so assiduously that he was worth nothing as a witness for the State. He could not swear that a child had been born, much less that one had been born and murdered.

And he was the sole witness available. The only other people who had first-hand knowledge of the events of that night could not be put upon the stand because they were Negro slaves, and their evidence

under the law of Virginia was not admissible against a white man. So the case as it went to the jury consisted of nothing but a mass of gossip, unsupported by a line of direct testimony. As individuals the jurors might believe or reject what the Negroes said, but as a jury they could not even consider it, for it was not evidence. Under such circumstances only one verdict was possible, and the jury returned it: acquittal.

But what did John Randolph think as he left the courtroom? Many years later he was to be given the inside story of this affair, and a startling story it was; but there is no evidence that at this time he knew any more about it than the court had heard. Of course outwardly he stuck to Richard, nor did he ever permit himself to utter a word of doubt of his brother; but he was no fool; he must have perceived the extraordinary thinness of the defense; and even John Randolph's power to make himself believe what he wished to believe must have staggered under the burden imposed upon it by the wish to believe Richard completely innocent.

After a hundred and thirty years one can only speculate. Bruce thinks that John from the very begin-

ning rejected the idea of Richard's guilt. Undoubtedly he tried to do so, but a number of otherwise obscure phases of his subsequent conduct become immediately intelligible if we admit that he may have failed, at least in part. It is much easier to understand the John Randolph of later years if, as he walked out of the courtroom that day struggling to preserve his faith in his brother's innocence, he really had at the back of his mind the ghastly conviction that Richard was guilty as charged.

The cruelty of a husband's betrayal by his wife, of a father's by his son, of a lover's by his mistress, or of a man's by his friend—these cruelties have engaged the attention of the world so long, have so often been celebrated in song and story, that they have become types and standards of comparison, and everyone understands and admits their bitterness. But, because it is a pain that is commonly suffered in silence, without the eloquence of romantic poetry, little attention has been paid to the agony of the boy whose big brother has betrayed him.

Randolph was now about twenty years old, yet there is no doubt that toward Brother Dicky he preserved more than a remnant of the relation of a small

boy. In its finest manifestations that is a beautiful relation—none the less beautiful because its outward expressions not uncommonly are absurd. Hero-worship is always a bit absurd, but for all that it can be very fine. In a world profoundly convinced "that thrift may follow fawning," where is there a devotion less tainted with self-interest than that of a boy for his big brother? Whose love is more stainless, whose trust is more complete, whose pride is stronger and whiter, whose adoration more sublime? A beautiful relation? Nay, it is more—if cleanliness and strength, if purity and honor combined can make it so, it is a sacred relation.

Then to have it torn away brutally, to have it not merely shattered, but befouled and made loathsome —is this not enough to embitter any mind?

Thirty years later this note came to Henry St. George Tucker, half-brother of John Randolph: "Our poor brother, Richard, was born 1770. He would have been fifty-six years old the 9th of this month. I can no more. J. R. of R." When he wrote that John Randolph of Roanoke was fifty-three and the best-hated man in the United States. "J. R. of R." was believed by most of the world to be all cold

poison, ruthless as death and cruel as the grave. And the estimate of the world was, in general, only too accurate; yet on Brother Dicky's birthday the icy devil became pitifully human, became again a small boy, dreadfully hurt.

The second blow had fallen, and the education of John Randolph was almost complete. His own misfortune unquestionably had bred in him a certain contempt for himself. The shattering of his idol now bred in him contempt for other men. His emotional nature was blasted, and its growth thereafter was inevitably dwarfed and stunted. At less than twenty-one, before he had thought of stepping upon the stage of national affairs, he had already a hard and bitter core in his heart.

CHAPTER V

He Becomes A Lawgiver

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He Becomes A Lawgiver

THE next three or four years saw John Randolph at loose ends. In the winter of 1792-93 he did, indeed, make an effort to resume his formal education. He entered the College of William and Mary, but after only a few months made a highly spectacular exit. He quarreled with another student, Robert B. Taylor, was challenged by him, met him on the dueling field, and shot him through the leg. The quarrel is said to have originated in a debating society over a discussion of politics. In view of the fact that all Virginia at the time was buzzing with the Glenlyvar scandal, one might guess that politics was merely the assigned and not the real reason; but two facts stand in the way of such an assumption. In the first place, Taylor was the challenger, so apparently it was Randolph's tongue which gave offense. In the second place, once Taylor's leg was mended, the quarrel was buried and the two men, although they contin-

ued to differ in politics, maintained the most amicable relations for the rest of their lives. It is inconceivable that Randolph would ever have forgiven an insult that touched a spot so sore as the disgrace of his brother. Therefore it seems probable that the quarrel *was* political; and this involves the corollary that at the age of twenty Randolph in debate already knew how to rasp his opponent until he flew into blind rage. His whole career, in later years, was to demonstrate how extremely effective and how extremely dangerous is this gift.

But the immediate effect of the duel was John Randolph's swift retirement from academic circles, for, while the colleges of the eighteenth century were lenient in some respects, when the students began to put bullets into each other the limit of endurance had been passed. Nor did he care to return to the neighborhood, even after the affair had blown over, for public opinion there was decidedly against him. For a while he returned to Philadelphia; but in 1794 he definitely renounced the project of learning the law by reading metaphysics in Edmund Randolph's office, and on attaining his majority took up his residence at Bizarre.

"I lived the life of a mere lounger," he wrote many years later to Tudor Randolph, son of Richard. "The society of your father, the conversation and company of John Thompson (for I was half my time in Petersburg) did not wake my literary ambition. I rode about from one race field to another, and, whilst at Newmarket races, my closest friend (your father excepted), Henry Middleton Rutledge, called at Bizarre on his way to Charleston and, not finding me at home, left a letter informing me of his intended voyage to Europe. I knew Rutledge in New York. We were at college together, and I burned with desire to see him once more. . . . I borrowed as much money as would defray the expense of my journey and, in June, 1796, went to Charleston."

It was to prove a momentous journey, for in the South on this occasion he found the political issue which was first to bring him prominently before the country as a scourge of rascals. But at the time he regarded it solely as a calamitous journey, for, just before he reached Bizarre again Richard Randolph died. His death was rather sudden, although he had clearly been going downhill ever since the trial three years earlier. John at the time was ill himself, ap-

parently of one of his recurring malarial attacks which had interrupted his return journey, and therefore was deprived of the poor consolation of being at the bedside.

He never got over this blow, for, guilty or not guilty, he loved Brother Dicky.

Richard's death put an end to the life of a "mere lounger," for it left John at the head of the family, and family responsibility he never shirked. Richard had left two sons, St. George and Tudor, neither much more than a baby and St. George, in addition, afflicted—deaf and dumb from birth and, as time proved, mentally incompetent. Moreover, Richard's financial affairs were in disorder, largely on account of a debt which he had inherited with his estate, and which St. George Tucker had never been able to pay off during Richard's minority. Richard's father, John the First, had incautiously gone to the assistance of a brother, and had borrowed heavily in England for his benefit, leaving his estate so heavily encumbered that it was many years before his surviving son cleared it. To clear it at all John was compelled to make one sacrifice that must have cut him to the heart. Shortly after Richard's death he sold

Matoax. Contrary to his mother's advice, he had parted with land. However, it was not a bad trade, since he got three thousand pounds for an estate which, if we are to believe Henry Adams, ninety years later was not worth three hundred dollars. He also made provision for carrying out the clause in Richard's will emancipating his slaves. They were gathered together in a community called Israel Hill, and were given an amount of land sufficient to maintain them, provided they worked it. But the tragic irony that had cursed poor Richard's life pursued his memory after his death. Israel Hill, which he had hoped would become the beacon of a new hope for the Negro race, degenerated, instead, into a nest of *banditti*, a nuisance to all the surrounding country, and a standing menace to law and order. For years it was held up in Virginia as one of the most convincing arguments against the practice of manumission.

This, however, was not John's fault. He carried out with scrupulous exactness the terms of his brother's will, and spared no exertion to protect the inheritance of his orphan nephews. He maintained his brother's establishment at Bizarre just as it had been, continuing to extend its hospitality to Mrs. Dudley

and to Nancy Randolph, although his hatred of the latter now began to assume the proportions of a mania.

From 1796 to 1799 the difficulties loaded upon him by his accession to the leadership of the Randolph clan gave him enough to do. This was, perhaps, the most constructive period of John Randolph's life, for within the space of these three years he straightened out the financial difficulties, established Richard's freed slaves on their own land, and put the estates of Bizarre and Roanoke into relatively good condition. By the end of that time, it was fairly evident that his brother's widow and orphans need not ever fear want, and John himself had laid the foundation of the great estate which he accumulated later. By the year 1799 he had reason to feel that he had done his full duty by the family, and although he was to guard its interests sedulously for many years more, he was in position to transfer the major part of his attention to other affairs. So he turned to politics.

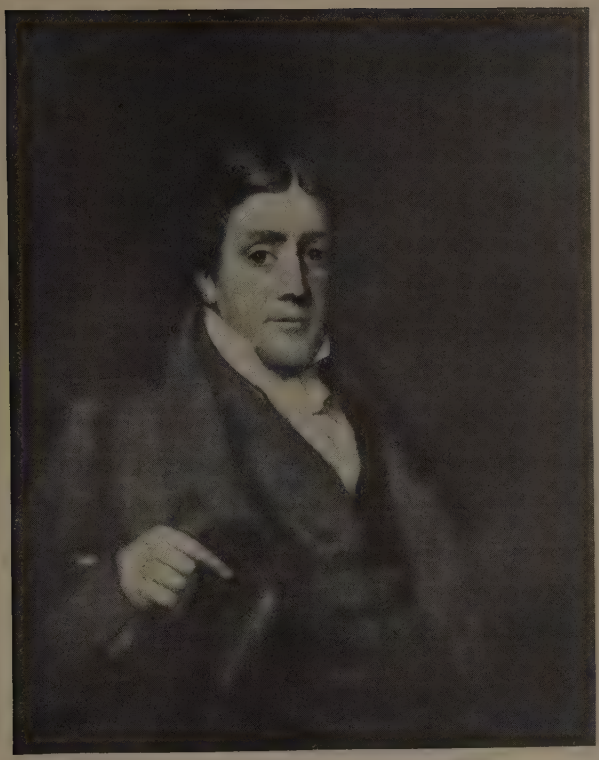
It was a subject sufficiently exciting at the moment. John Adams was President of the United States and James Monroe was governor of Virginia,

which is to say, the Federalists held Philadelphia, the national, and the Republicans Richmond, the state capital. For more than a year the vessels of the American and French navies had been fighting whenever they met, although no war had been declared. Under cover of the excitement over this situation the Federalists had jammed through Congress the Alien and Sedition laws, which were hated and feared in Virginia as they were in most of the States. Long Thomas Jefferson and little James Madison were furiously at work organizing the opposition to what they termed the monarchistic party at Philadelphia.

Normally it would seem that John Randolph belonged in the ranks of the party of Adams. "I am an aristocrat. I love justice and hate equality," he said. Certainly there had been small equalitarian taint in the administrations of Washington and Adams. The first President was a lordly individual and the courts which he held at Philadelphia would not have discredited Buckingham Palace. As for the second President, nature, which had built him on the lines of a hogshead, had put lordliness forever beyond him; but he did his best. If he couldn't be lordly, he was at least pompous. "I was in New

York," said Randolph long afterward, "when John Adams took his seat as Vice-President. I recollect—for I was a schoolboy at the time—attending the lobby of Congress when I ought to have been at school. I remember the manner in which my brother was spurned by the coachman of the then Vice-President for coming too near the arms emblazoned on the vice-regal carriage." Any commoner was spurned if he came too near the sacred person in John Adams' day; and the Alien and Sedition laws made it possible to lay the lash upon those who came too near even in speech and thought. "Perhaps," said John Randolph thoughtfully, after narrating the incident of the carriage, "I may have some of this old animosity rankling in my heart . . . coming from a race who are known never to forsake a friend or forgive a foe."

But if Randolph was an aristocrat, he was first of all a Virginia aristocrat, and the whole trend of Federalism was toward the complete extinction of Virginia, as well as of the other states. Against his Virginia patriotism no other consideration could stand, and when it was involved he was as ready to condemn a fellow-Virginian, even the greatest, as he



A Virginia Aristocrat
(ENGRAVING OF JOHN RANDOLPH BY J. SARTAIN)

was to condemn a Massachusetts Adams. When the excitement over the hated Jay treaty with England was at its height, he is said at a dinner to have offered the toast: "George Washington—may he be damned!" But this was a little too stiff even for Virginia anti-Federalists. The company refused to drink it. So Randolph added the qualification "—if he signs Jay's treaty," whereupon it appears that it went down very well.

But the real reason why John Randolph was a Republican was that he had met Thomas Jefferson. "I was an anti-Federalist before I was fairly breeched," he said once, referring to his indoctrination at the hands of George Mason and Patrick Henry, those great enemies of the Constitution. But anti-Federalism did not involve the thorough-going Republicanism which he accepted in 1799. Unquestionably he owed that to the red-headed mountaineer. To be thrown into intimate personal contact with Jefferson, to hear him at the dinner table, or sitting before the fire, to be received by him on the informal footing of kinship, and then to resist him, one must have been a mighty man indeed. John Marshall could do it, but there was only one John

Marshall among the young men of Virginia at that time; John Randolph certainly was no second.

But while Randolph accepted Jefferson's dicta he was far from understanding his doctrine. This, indeed, was no discredit to him, for no one else understood it then, nor for many years after. For that matter, perhaps no one comprehends it fully to this day. When Jefferson talked of the rights of man, Randolph understood him to mean the rights of gentlemen, and especially Virginia gentlemen. When Jefferson declaimed against the danger of a strong government, Randolph understood him to mean the danger of any government which might interfere with the oligarchy which ruled Virginia. When Jefferson called upon the people to rally and resist the encroachments of tyranny, Randolph understood that the call was addressed to the Randolphs and their friends and equals.

Jefferson also stimulated, if he did not inspire, Randolph's Gallomania, which had been inflamed by the unacknowledged French war. But where Randolph's enthusiasm was for the overthrow of the Bourbons, Jefferson's was for the incorrigibly revolutionary spirit of mankind.

So Randolph rushed into the Jeffersonian camp, although by every instinct he was allied with the other side. In 1799 a desperate crisis seemed to be impending. Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson, indeed, placed their hopes on overthrowing the administration at the ballot-box, but Governor Monroe was a serious soul with a practical turn of mind. He began to collect munitions. He built a huge armory at Richmond, and while the legislatures of Virginia and Kentucky were passing resolutions, Monroe began to fill his armory with guns and ammunition. He had plenty of excuses, of course, but most of Virginia and all of Philadelphia believed that he intended to turn those guns on the troops of President Adams if the necessity arose. John Randolph believed it, and raised not the slightest objection.

The Federalists, desperately anxious, pleaded with Washington to come to their aid, and in southern Virginia they went so far as to make terms with their ancient enemy, Patrick Henry, and put him up as their candidate for the State Senate. It was a shrewd stroke, for Henry's was a name to conjure with in Virginia; and when he opened his campaign

at Charlotte courthouse, the Federalists assumed that one district was safe.

Then young John Randolph, instigated by certain of his neighbors, had the audacity to announce himself as a candidate for Congress. Furthermore, although he was unknown, and Henry was regarded as the greatest orator of the day, he dared meet the old lion in joint debate at Charlotte courthouse. The debate has come down in Virginia traditions as one of the greatest days Charlotte courthouse ever saw. The old Revolutionary patriot made a magnificent plea for loyalty to the Union, and when he sat down most of those present assumed that it was all over. Still, many of them remained to hear what young "Jack Randle," as they called him then, could have to say. He had plenty to say. He spoke for three hours and held his crowd. If Henry spoke for the Union, this boy of twenty-six spoke for Virginia, and Virginia, after all, meant a great deal more to the audience than did the Union. He had not yet developed the clear, incisive style of his later years, and Henry Adams is inclined to think that his speech consisted largely of rodomontade. But whatever it was, it was effective. After he sat down tradition re-

lates that his opponent sent for him, and shaking his hand said, "Young man, you call me father; then, my son, I have something to say unto thee: keep justice, keep truth,—and you will live to think differently."

At any rate, John Randolph won, although part of the same constituency at the same time elected Henry to the office he sought. Henry died before he could assume office, but Randolph took his seat in December, 1799, only a year and a half after he had reached the Constitutional age limit of twenty-five.

When he came up to be sworn the clerk of the House, amazed, asked him if he really was old enough to occupy a seat in the House of Representatives.

"Ask my constituents," said John Randolph, shortly, and was sworn in.

CHAPTER VI

He Becomes A Chieftain

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IF one's name was Randolph, one could not have been described, in 1799, as totally unknown in Philadelphia. In 1799 every great name of the Virginia aristocracy was potent at the seat of government, even though the bearer, as an individual, might never have been seen there. So it would be inexact to describe John Randolph, when he first entered Congress, as being an obscure new member. The very fact that he was a Randolph would have secured him a certain amount of attention, even had he not for years previously been acquainted with many members.

Certainly the leader of the minority considered this new recruit with grave attention. That leader already commanded a great array of talent—Nathaniel Macon, Edward Livingston, Joseph Nicholson and Samuel Smith, among others—but still there was always room for another, and the shrewd Penn-

sylvania Swiss who led them welcomed the advent of young John. Albert Gallatin never stood on ceremony when there was an advantage to be gained; and he promptly took Randolph into the councils of the minority, regardless of his youth and inexperience.

But if the Virginian lacked a national reputation it was not for long, because the majority, exhibiting its customary fatuity, promptly gave him one. It pleased President Adams to drag John Randolph out of his relative obscurity and make him the most talked-of man in the United States for a while; thereby making it certain that Randolph's utterances would thenceforth command attention.

The series of stupidities which made the man famous began with a stupid speech by Randolph himself. He had addressed the House twice before, but briefly in each case, so this was his first extended address. It was in support of a motion to reduce the army, and the theme of the argument was the menace to the liberties of a free people afforded by great standing armies. There is no question that he made a good job of it. The stupidity was not in any failure to support the point, for the speaker raked history

for instances and applied them with deadly effect. The stupidity lay in permitting himself to be swept on the tide of his own eloquence into complete forgetfulness of the local application of his remarks, so that his description of the standing army was characterized by more realism than regard for the feelings of the men in the service, as witness this passage:

> "The military parade which meets the eye in almost every direction, excites the gall of our citizens; they feel a just indignation at the sight of loungers who live upon the public, who consume the fruits of their honest industry under the pretext of protecting them from a foreign yoke. They put no confidence, Sir, in the protection of a handful of ragamuffins; they know that, when danger comes, they must meet it and they only ask arms at your hands."

This was, to put the kindliest interpretation on it, no credit to John Randolph's intelligence; but it was promptly capped by a still more stupid retaliation. A night or two later a pair of officers of the Marine Corps, a captain and a lieutenant, publicly insulted Randolph at a theater, not directly, in such a way that he could call the offenders individually to account, but covertly yet plainly. They made re-

marks, not *to*, but *at* him, loudly enough for the whole house to hear. They talked noisily of "Virginia ragamuffins." They crowded roughly into a seat beside him. Finally, after the curtain fell, there was some jostling on the stairs, Randolph's collar was jerked from behind, and no one would acknowledge the act.

In this contest of absurdities it was now Randolph's move and he rose to the occasion by writing a letter full of verbal thunder and lightning to the President of the United States. The President was John Adams, and Randolph knew what manner of man John Adams was; yet he pointedly left out the customary flourishes, such as the salutation, "To His Excellency the President," and the subscription, "Your most humble and obedient servant." He addressed his letter, "To the President of the United States," and subscribed it, "With respect, your fellow-citizen." Indeed, the very act of appealing to the President in such circumstances was, as Bruce describes it, "a little saucy." And in a member of Congress sauciness is distinctly silly. The young man from Virginia badly needed a snub.

Unfortunately, John Adams was the President of

all Presidents least capable of "taking down" a saucy youngster neatly and expertly. Instead he crowned this tower of idiocies with the most magnificent one of all—he solemnly called on his Cabinet officers for their advice, and they as solemnly assured him that the dignity of his office had been touched. So the President transmitted the Randolph letter to Congress accompanied by a special message, calling attention to its "tendencies" and its "matter and style."

A blind man should have foreseen the result. The Federalist majority took the President's message as tantamount to instructions to spank John Randolph. Therefore a special committee brought in a report censuring him sharply, and censuring him alone, although the marine officers had patently lied about the business during the investigation and merited a reprimand. And when the majority report was presented, the minority saw in it a fine opportunity to belabor the administration. Therefore all the heavy artillery of the House went into action. Albert Gallatin spoke in defense of Randolph, and that compelled James A. Bayard to speak in defense of the administration. Robert Goodloe Harper spoke.

Joseph H. Nicholson spoke. Gabriel Christie spoke. Everybody spoke. As Bruce puts it, "the discussion fell but little below the dignity of a field debate of the very first rank." After the House had wrangled to the verge of exhaustion, one resolution, addressing the President in flattering terms, was adopted; and then the Speaker cut the Gordian knot by ruling all further action on the subject out of order.

But the damage, from the Federalist point of view, was already done. The newspapers, of course, had been full of the discussion, and no newspaper reader in the country could longer be unaware of the existence of Mr. Randolph, of Virginia. He was the man who, according to the Federalists, had insulted the army, flouted the President and threatened to destroy altogether the "ancient, respectable and urbane usages" of America—clearly, a dreadful fellow, a dangerous, and therefore an important, fellow. Or he was, if you read a Jeffersonian paper, the first tribune of the people to fall victim to the military bullies by whose aid the administration proposed to gag Congress as it had already gagged the press through the Alien and Sedition laws. Christie, indeed, declared in the debate that the army was

already picking officers who would, one after another, force Randolph into duels until he should be killed. But whether your leanings were Federalist or Republican, you were informed that this Randolph was an important man.

So the President, instead of snubbing the young upstart, had made him at a stroke a celebrated man. It was a characteristic Adams exploit; for although he was an honest man, and as sincere a patriot as ever breathed, when it came to handling men John Adams could climb to heights of maladroitness hardly approached by any of his successors.

In all probability the incident had an unfortunate effect on Randolph, too. He had given rein to his bitterness and had been, in the large, successful. The incident, Henry Adams' opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, did nothing to discourage him from adopting headlong attack as his customary method of fighting—headlong attack that moved too swiftly to be scrupulous about exact justice, and that would readily swap accuracy and fairness in order to turn an effective phrase. Here, right at the beginning of his career, he had employed that method and had come off very well indeed. Why should he re-

gard it with suspicion? He did not. He accepted it as the style of fighting best adapted to his temperament and talents, and employed it thenceforth.

But 1799 merged into 1800 and with the turn of the century came the fall of the Federalist party. It is difficult to imagine the consternation which the election of 1800 spread among gentlemen who imagined themselves the hope of the country. It was only seven years since the *sansculottes* of Paris had finished off a king and queen, and in the United States then the Place de la Concorde had all the horrid significance, among gentlemen, that the village of Ekaterinburg obtained among the same class a hundred and twenty-five years later. Louis of France had had a public trial, indeed, and was executed in open day, whereas Nicholas of Russia had not even a pretense of a trial and died in a cellar; but the Bolsheviki were no more sincerely abhorred by American gentlemen in 1925 than were the Jacobins in 1800. Moreover, the Bolsheviki produced nothing more threatening to other nations than a set of propagandists, whereas Revolutionary France had produced Napoleon; and in 1800 there

seemed no end to the possible conquests of the Corsican.

Now this Jefferson was notoriously a sympathizer with the French radicals, and he had swept the country in the Presidential election. Many Federalists quite honestly believed that if he were permitted to assume office he would set up the guillotine on Pennsylvania Avenue, and destroy property, religion and morality, public and private, with the utmost ruthlessness. Therefore it is not astonishing that they resorted to desperate expedients to prevent the catastrophe.

The Jeffersonians had played squarely into the Federalists' hands, too. The Constitution as it then stood declared that the candidate who received the most electoral votes should be declared President, and the next highest candidate Vice-President. To prevent the possibility of any Federalist slipping in, the Jeffersonians, or Republicans, as they styled themselves, had all voted for two Republicans, intending to make Thomas Jefferson President and Aaron Burr Vice-President. But when the returns were in it appeared that they had inadvertently given Jefferson and Burr exactly the same number of

votes. Hence there was no election, and it devolved upon the House of Representatives to choose one of the two as President.

This House, of course, belonged to the old Congress. It was what is now known as "a Lame Duck Congress" and was controlled by the Federalists. In this situation it occurred to some of the more panicky Federalists to defeat the will of the people by making Burr President. Anything, they decided, would be better than to have the red radical, the organizing genius of the revolt, in the White House. It was the counsel of desperation, but such was the terror inspired by Jefferson that men ordinarily sane enough regarded it as the height of statesmanship.

There was one Federalist, however, who appreciated the madness of the scheme. This was Alexander Hamilton, who had more reason to hate Jefferson than anyone else in his party, for the red-headed mountaineer had been Hamilton's only successful antagonist. Had it not been for Jefferson, Hamilton would have held the country in the hollow of his hand. But for this very reason Hamilton appreciated the stature of the Virginian; furthermore, he was too great a man to be frightened by the radical appari-

tions which had stampeded his fellow-partisans; and, finally, he had fairly measured the character and capacities of Aaron Burr. Therefore he denounced the scheme to make Burr President, and largely through his influence it was defeated.

So in 1801 Thomas Jefferson, friend and kinsman of John Randolph, came to the Presidency. Gallatin was promptly translated to the Cabinet, and when the new House was organized the chairmanship of the immensely important Committee on Ways and Means was given to Mr. Randolph, of Virginia.

CHAPTER VII

He Becomes an Exponent of Honesty in Politics

CHAPTER VII

He Becomes an Exponent of Honesty in Politics

NOW while Randolph was the kinsman, the friend, and the pupil of Jefferson, he was not profoundly Jeffersonian. "I am not like some of our party," he wrote to his friend Nicholson while the election was still pending in the House, "who are as much devoted to him [Jefferson] as the feds were to General Washington. I am not a *mon*archist in any sense." And a few days later, "There are those men who support republicans from monarchical principles; and if the head of that very great and truly good man can be turned by adulatory nonsense, they will endeavor to persuade him that our salvation depends on an individual. This is the essence of monarchy, and with this doctrine I have been, am, and ever will be, at issue."

This difference from his party leader went deeper than Randolph's distaste for submitting his opinions to the dictation of another, although he was the last

man to permit anyone else to make up his mind. There was a profound divergence between the political philosophies of the two men, based in the last analysis, no doubt, on a temperamental difference. Jefferson was chronically optimistic. Indeed, it would not be stretching the truth far to describe him as fatally optimistic. Jefferson was, in the main, a happy man. He had known hardship, but not to a heart-breaking and back-breaking degree. He had encountered obstacles, difficulties and dangers, but he had emerged from them safely, and more often than not triumphantly. Life had been kind to Thomas Jefferson. His troubles had been sufficiently serious to toughen and harden, but not to warp and scar him.

This is no disparagement of the essential greatness of the man. A weaker spirit would have collapsed under a load which Jefferson bore lightly. He was too big to be easily embittered, and he never fell into a disaster terrible enough to overcome his great strength. He was not frustrate, not foiled, not forever dreaming of accomplishments which he lacked the force to achieve.

Randolph, on the other hand, was already spirit-

ually poisoned. His education had been ludicrously —or, rather, tragically—ill-adapted to his needs. Misfortune had dogged him from the cradle. Illness had made him a creature apart, unlike normal men.

Finally, his trust had been betrayed. The one man to whom he had given the full measure of his pride, his affection, his whole-hearted confidence, apparently had turned out to be a dog; for Brother Dicky's infamy was not merely a knife, but a poisoned knife, in his breast.

Therefore Thomas Jefferson and John Randolph never at any time saw the world under the same light. But it was not the optimist who was the more romantic of the two. Jefferson understood the code of a gentleman well enough, but he understood clearly that the world is not inhabited exclusively by gentlemen, and did not repine. Randolph permitted the villainy which he had discovered everywhere to drive him to madness. He could not suffer cads gladly, not even when they were necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose; and therefore he never said a truer word than when he stalked out of James Madison's office on one occasion snorting,

"Good morning, sir! I see I am not calculated for a politician!"

But when the first Congress of Mr. Jefferson's first administration assembled, these differences between the two men seemed unimportant. The victory over the Federalists had been overwhelming. Save for the judiciary, all branches of the federal government were in the hands of the Republicans, and they set themselves happily to the task of organizing the victory and establishing the Utopia which their orators had promised.

The new chairman of the Ways and Means Committee went to work vigorously. His first important move was to press for the abolition of the "midnight judges." The Federalist Lame Duck Congress had done more than hold up the election of Jefferson. They had striven to secure at least one branch of the government against the incoming Bolsheviki by creating a great number of new federal judgeships and filling them with sound Federalists. The Republicans asserted that President Adams had signed these appointments at midnight, March 3, 1801, for the sole purpose of handicapping and embarrassing his successor. Randolph, therefore, reported a bill to

get rid of these officers by abolishing the offices; and he led the fight with such fire and vigor that the wisdom of his selection as House leader was thoroughly vindicated. The judges went down, and Randolph went up in the estimation both of his party and of the country.

Then followed three years that seem to belie his whole subsequent career. Randolph led the House with a skill which would have done credit to a veteran parliamentarian. He was resourceful, ingenious, brilliant at times, and—most amazing of all—moderate and tactful. He welded the Republicans into a compact, aggressive and efficient majority. He established and maintained party discipline, which no leader ever accomplished without first disciplining himself. He gave every promise of becoming one of the really great parliamentary leaders, not merely of his own day, but of all American history. By the time he reached his thirtieth birthday it seemed reasonable to believe that his name was destined to be added to the list of Virginians of the first order of greatness, the list that includes Washington, Jefferson and Marshall.

And so far from developing a tendency toward

hair-splitting legalism, he was at this time too latitudinarian even for the President. The matter of the Louisiana Purchase showed it. James Monroe, having been sent to France to try to settle the vexed question of New Orleans, did so by the amazing process of buying half the continent. In an unguarded moment Napoleon had offered to sell the whole west bank of the Mississippi, along with New Orleans, and Monroe instantly accepted. At home President Jefferson and the Senate as promptly ratified the treaty, and the thing was done. But in so doing Mr. Jefferson, as Adams puts it, "scandalized even himself." He could see absolutely no Constitutional authority for such a purchase by the national government, and so informed his confidants; but he relied on the common sense of the country to justify him in overstepping his authority in this instance. Therefore he counselled his party to admit the technical violation, and ask the country for "an act of indemnity."

But this the Republicans were in no mood to do. Nathaniel Macon, Speaker of the House, and Joseph Nicholson, co-leader with Randolph, probably would have acquiesced in Mr. Jefferson's program, but not

Randolph. He asked nobody's pardon, and in a speech justifying the purchase he cut away his own arguments for States' Rights. It was a speech which he was to regret later; but at the moment he could think only of the fact that the purchase was patriotic, wise and honest, and for an act of that sort he refused to apologize.

Nor was the country in an apologetic mood. It swallowed Mr. Jefferson's excursion beyond the Constitution without blinking. The administration stood at the zenith of popular esteem, and John Randolph shared in its glory.

And just here it is worth while to make note of a curious and ironic fact. In this Louisiana business John Randolph indisputably did violence to his principles. He consciously subverted the doctrine of States' Rights to the national well-being. He consciously strove to add to the prestige and power of the central government, although he regarded that growing prestige and power with honest terror. In this case he betrayed his political faith for the immediate advantage.

If the copy-book maxims always held good, if consistency were really a jewel, if intellectual honesty

were always the best policy, then this act should have begun the ruin of John Randolph. On the contrary, it added to his power and heightened the esteem in which the country held him. It was altogether one of the best strokes he ever made. The disconcerting fact is that all too frequently when this man acted honestly and sincerely, he played havoc with his own fortunes and those of his friends. But on this occasion by acting sinuously and disingenuously he benefited his country and himself. Out of this let the moralists make what they will; the fact stands.

But the heyday of Republican glory and excellence was already drawing to its close. The party had come into power actuated by motives as pure as ever moved a political party, and throughout the greater part of the first administration its acts compared favorably with its protestations. But it was in office now, and its leader had long ago remarked that when men begin to lust after office a rottenness begins in their conduct. The first conspicuous rottenness in the conduct of the Republicans developed in connection with the Yazoo scandal; and it was denunciation of this scandal that developed to the full John Randolph's unparalleled power of vituperation.

As it happened, he was well acquainted with the whole story of the deal, for he had been on the ground shortly after it happened. In 1795 the legislature of the state of Georgia was bought up at wholesale by a group of land speculators. The legislature passed an act granting to this group for a nominal consideration something like forty million acres of land in what was known as the Yazoo country, constituting a large part of what is now the states of Alabama and Mississippi, but then the property of Georgia. So barefaced and notorious was the bribery by which this steal was accomplished that the people of Georgia rose in fury, swept the corrupt legislators from power and elected others who, in 1796, repealed the act and wrote its repudiation into the state constitution. In the meantime, the speculators had sold some of the land to innocent purchasers; but these were instructed by the state of Georgia to surrender their deeds and get their money back, which many of them did. Randolph made his visit to Georgia in 1796, when the excitement over the Yazoo business was at its height, so he knew exactly what sort of fraud had been perpetrated.

Later Georgia ceded the entire territory to the

United States and its administration was taken over by the federal government. But not all of the presumptively innocent purchasers had surrendered their titles and received their money back; and a group of them, under the name of the New England Mississippi Land Company, now presented a claim against the government. A committee composed of Madison, Secretary of State, Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, and Levi Lincoln, Attorney-General, was appointed to examine this claim. They reported that it was dubious in the extreme, but could certainly be made the basis of a long-drawn-out lawsuit; therefore they recommended that the claimants be bought off on the basis of about twelve and a half cents on the dollar. It was plain submission to blackmail, in the opinion of the committee; but it seemed likely that it would cost more to defend the suit than it would to buy off the claimants.

But when the suggestion was made to John Randolph, as leader of the House, he blew up with a deafening roar. He knew all about the Yazoo business. He knew how open had been the bribery, how barefaced had been the swindle, how cynical and unashamed the steal in the Georgia legislature. He

knew that the whole thing grew out of the traitorous conduct of men elected to represent the people, but who had sold them out for money. The thing stank to high Heaven, and he regarded it as insulting that he should be expected to touch it, even indirectly.

It was not that he always objected to following a dubious policy. He was aware that the exigencies of statecraft sometimes force governors into taking steps of whose propriety they are doubtful. Was he not even then supporting and defending the Louisiana Purchase, although its constitutionality was more than questionable? But the Louisiana Purchase, while it might have been illegal, was clean. No one suspected the negotiators of seeking a private profit out of it, or of seeking anything other than the good of the country. So Randolph was willing to subject his principles to a considerable strain in its defense.

This Yazoo thing, though, was to his mind nothing but plain, unadorned stealing, and he would tolerate no compromise with thieves. But to his amazement and mortification, he discovered that his party did not altogether share his righteous indignation. The New England Mississippi Land Company

had plenty of money, and the rank and file of the Republicans were politicians of a very common variety. A great many of them were reached by agents of the corporation. Worse than that, they got hold of one of the high officers of the government. Gideon Granger, the Postmaster-General, headed the New England Mississippi Land Company. As Postmaster-General he had patronage to distribute, and all members of the House knew it. Soon the word went around that the way to secure post-office patronage was to vote for the Yazoo claims.

So John Randolph found himself facing, in his own party, the same taint of corruption which he had denounced in the Federalists. Then and there he ceased to be a party leader and became the scourge of Yazoo men. Indeed, the rod with which he had beaten the Federalists became a whip of scorpions when he turned upon his own party. He remembered that Gideon Granger had been engaged previously in another land scheme of doubtful honesty, the Connecticut Reserve, and he now said of the Postmaster-General:

"His gigantic grasp embraces with one hand the shores of Lake Erie and stretches with the other to the Bay of

Mobile. Millions of acres are easily digested by such stomachs. . . . The retail trade of fraud and imposture yields too small and slow a profit to gratify their cupidity. They buy and sell corruption in the gross, and a few millions more or less is hardly felt in the account. The deeper the play the greater their zest for the game; and the stake which is set upon their throw is nothing less than the patrimony of the people."

Now if this description be regarded simply as Gideon Granger pictured by an honest man, there is nothing much amiss with it. But it cannot be regarded in that light exclusively. It was something more. It was also a picture of the Postmaster-General as limned by the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, of his own party. And this, from the standpoint of the party, was anything but admirable. It meant a frightful battle within the ranks, a battle over which the opposition would gloat.

Furthermore, when the House Committee on Claims had approved the compromise, he referred to the committee in this manner:

"Sir, when the war-worn soldier of the Revolution, or the desolate widow and famished offspring of him who sealed your independence with his blood, ask at the door of that committee for bread, they receive the Statute of Limi-

tation. On such occasions you hear of no equity in the case. Their claims have not the stamp and seal of iniquity upon them. *Summum jus* is the measure dealt out to them. The equity of the committee is reserved for those claims which are branded with iniquity and stamped with infamy."

Members of the committee could hardly be expected to be flattered by such words, or to retain a high affection for the man who uttered them. More than that, the compromise which the committee approved had been recommended by three members of the Cabinet, James Madison, Albert Gallatin and Levi Lincoln. These men were no Gideon Grangers, and there is no sufficient reason to doubt that their recommendation had been made in all good faith to protect the interests of the country. Furthermore, "the great little Madison," in particular, had political aspirations of his own which the demolition of the Republican party would not help. He had every reason for being resentful, and he was.

The net result of John Randolph's stand for strict honesty was, therefore, to blow up his own influence as a party leader. Gideon Granger promptly went to New England and organized a faction for the avowed purpose of pulling down Randolph. All the

Yazoo men in the House developed a virulent hatred of the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and waited only an opportunity to throw him overboard. The members of the Committee on Claims, Yazoo men or not, were furious, of course. The Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney-General had been well peppered by the shot fired at the Committee on Claims, and Lincoln and Madison were extremely sore. Mild Albert Gallatin, indeed, seems to have dismissed the business good-humoredly; at any rate, he maintained pleasant relations with Randolph.

Finally, even the President grew extremely thoughtful when he contemplated Randolph as House leader. The long mountaineer had, indeed, no particular objection to the roasting of any number of Yazoo men; but he had decided objections to the disruption of his party before his first administration was over. Thomas Jefferson was facing a sea of troubles, and his only hope of survival, as he saw it, lay in keeping his party together as a compact, aggressive, and vigorous fighting force. The corruption of a Georgia legislature, even the swindling proclivities of a postmaster-general, were relatively

insignificant details among the immensely greater problems that faced him.

And now his House leader had gone romantic. Randolph was acting on the grotesque assumption that every Republican was a true patriot and amenable to the code of a gentleman. He was ignoring completely "the cohesive power of public plunder" which every realistic politician knows is one of the great forces which hold political parties together. He was honest. He was brilliant. He was vigorous and sincerely patriotic. Nevertheless, he had committed the one crime that is unpardonable in statecraft. He had departed from reality. He was acting upon the assumption that things which ought to be true are true in fact, and such a course in a man called upon to deal with the realities of public policy inevitably leads to ruin. Jefferson sighed, no doubt, but he arrived at the logical conclusion. Randolph as the administration House leader wouldn't do.

CHAPTER VIII

He Becomes an Ishmaelite

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RANDOLPH arrived at the same conclusion shortly after his chief, but it was not yet apparent to the country at large. With the public the Yazoo campaign was a huge success. Mere voters, to whom party harmony was nothing and who carried no responsibility for a program of administration and legislation, appreciated only the fact that the member from Virginia had exposed a gigantic steal, and exposed it in crackling, sparkling eloquence that delighted them. They indorsed without hesitation Randolph's rhetorical renunciation of leadership:

> "If by a leader be meant one who speaks his opinion frankly and boldly—who . . . will not connive at public robbery, be the robbers who they may,—then the imputation may be just; such is the nature of my ambition: but in the common acceptation of such words, nothing can be more false. . . . I took my degrees, sir, in this House in a minority . . . whose every act bore the test of rigorous

principle, and with them to the last I will exclaim, *Fiat justitia ruat cœlum!*"

Back in the Fourth Virginia district no one took into consideration the fact that the leader of a democracy is the man who gets things done, not one who beats his breast and bawls, "Let there be justice though the heavens fall!" The plain people rarely take into consideration the unlovely realities of political practice. They are too fond of the dramatic, of sonorous eloquence, of rolling periods and flashing repartee to give much attention to the dull, prosaic work that makes a man's influence in the House of Representatives. When he blazed out against the Yazoo scandal John Randolph furnished his constituents with a good show, the best they had had in years; and while he may have undermined his position in Washington he solidified it in the district.

But Yazoo had sapped the morale of the majority. It was no longer the aggressive, eager, compact fighting force it had been when Federalism went down before it in 1801. Randolph was now to lead it in its last charge and to the defeat that broke it down as

a revolutionary movement and converted it into a mere political party, thenceforth always much concerned, and frequently exclusively concerned, with the spoils of office. This final wild assault was the impeachment of Judge Chase.

Samuel Chase was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a very able and a very distinguished man. In addition he was an arrogant old peacock, bilious, prejudiced, egotistical and violent. Habitually he violated not merely the proprieties, but the common decencies, of his position. At the trial of John Fries, involved in the Whisky Rebellion, he became a second and more bitter prosecuting attorney masquerading as a judge. In Delaware he commanded a grand jury to indict one Callender under the Alien and Sedition laws, and when it hesitated to do so refused to discharge it until it had bowed to the judicial will. In Baltimore he made his charge to the grand jury a political harangue, in the course of which he declared that the acts of the existing Congress "will, in my judgment, take away all security for property and personal liberty" and a moment later added what even Henry Adams calls

"a pointed insult" to the President of the United States in these words:

> "The modern doctrines by our late reformers, that all men in a state of society are entitled to enjoy equal liberty and equal rights, have brought this mighty mischief upon us, and I fear that it will rapidly progress until peace and order, freedom and property, shall be destroyed."

This was too much for the patience even of Jefferson, and he wrote to Nicholson, suggesting that some action should be taken. Nicholson mentioned the matter to Macon, the Speaker, who advised him not to take the lead in the matter lest he be accused of desiring to get Judge Chase's position on the Supreme Court bench; so the matter was entrusted to Randolph, who was not a lawyer and therefore could not be charged with trying to remove Chase to make room for himself.

Probably the Chase trial was mismanaged. Randolph and his supporters were opposed by a brilliant array of counsel, for whom they were no match in the field of law; and they had themselves dragged the case into that field by including among the articles of impeachment some charges involving criminality.

But all that is probably beside the mark. Had Randolph been a second Coke, and his most formidable opponent Simple Simon; had no suggestion of criminality been brought in but the whole case made purely an inquest of office, and therefore a political, rather than a legal tangle; and had every other alleged error in the conduct of the case been avoided, it is easy to believe that Judge Chase would have been acquitted, just the same.

For there was unquestionably much more than the removal of one judge involved. The impeachment was avowedly an effort to assert the right of the representatives of the people to control the judiciary by establishing the power of Congress to remove a judge for abusing his privileges, whether criminality were involved or not. This much the Republicans admitted, but the Federalists saw in it a great deal more. They saw in it the first step toward the removal of the entire Supreme bench, and especially John Marshall, the Chief Justice. Therefore, it was not Samuel Chase, but John Marshall whom the nine Federalist Senators were judging.

Furthermore, the Northern Republicans did not love John Randolph. Most of the Yazoo men were

Northerners. The Southern constituencies were too close to the scene and therefore knew too much about Yazoo for their representatives to dare soil their hands with it. Then plenty of Northern Republicans, who were as honest as Randolph himself, had begun to distrust, not his honor indeed but his judgment. They were easily persuaded that if Chase were convicted, it would not be beyond Randolph to do just what the Federalists were loudly asserting he was sure to do; so a number of the Republicans also felt that Marshall's fate was bound up with that of Chase. A two-thirds vote was required to convict, and there were thirty-four Senators; so the nine Federalists needed only three other votes to save their man. They got them, with several to spare. A majority found Chase guilty on three of the eight counts, but on none was there a two-thirds vote for conviction.

So the handsome little man who presided over the court, Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States, was compelled to pronounce Samuel Chase not guilty of the charges brought against him.

It was a harrowing experience for John Randolph. He was roughly handled by the attorneys for the defense, but that mattered little. He handled their

A Corrosive Cynic

(A RARE ENGRAVING OF JOHN RANDOLPH)

client roughly in return—so roughly that the incandescent peroration in which he laid the lash on Chase mercilessly in his opening address became the favorite declamation of generations of schoolboys. What left him battered, bruised and angry was his collision with forces that he could not comprehend, much less master and control. Early in the trial he knew he was defeated. He knew it before the terrible Luther Martin, leader of the defense counsel, ripped his legal arguments to pieces—knew it long before Burr rose to announce the vote.

Luther Martin did not win that case. It was won before Martin opened his mouth, won before Randolph presented his charges. True, Chase's friends were horribly frightened, and some of them openly predicted his conviction, but their fears were groundless, for all that. Something was slowly emerging of which Randolph and his followers did not take sufficient account. This was the spirit of nationalism, the notion that the government of the United States was something more than the fiscal and administrative agent of seventeen sovereign powers. John Randolph was conspicuously the agent of those seventeen powers, specifically the agent of the one called

Virginia. More than the necessary one-third of the Senators felt, some clearly, some obscurely, but all strongly, that it was not fitting that the judiciary of the United States should be subject to the control of the various states, or even to the control of the representatives of the people, except for acts in themselves criminal. Therefore they dismissed it from such control; and John Marshall proceeded with a quiet mind to the demolition of state sovereignty and the erection of a nationalism that could not be overthrown either by the fiat of the people or by force of arms.

Randolph understood the implications of the verdict with appalling clearness, but not the psychology which produced it. He saw that it involved the downfall of the liberty of Virginia, and, laboring under the delusion that men love liberty above all other political blessings, he was at a loss to account for such a verdict. His incorrigible romanticism blinded him to the fact that what most men prize above all else is not liberty, but safety, and that therefore they will tolerate a government strong enough to defend them, even if it tyrannizes over them, longer than they will tolerate one

which leaves them free, but also naked to their enemies.

So he clung to the notion that Senators who voted in support of this nationalism were misrepresentative of the people. It was plain that they were voting down freedom, and John Randolph could not rid himself of the belief that a man who voted down freedom had been reached by some sinister influence. He did not ignore the obvious explanation. He was literally unable to perceive it. It is probable that never once did it occur to him that such men were the true representatives of the people while he, with his punctilio, his scruples, and his reckless courage, was the misrepresentative. So, obsessed with the delusion that the member of Congress who rated prudence higher than liberty must have been influenced by some sinister power, he was forever probing and digging in an effort to uncover and expose that influence. Inevitably there were many instances in which he sought a sinister motive where none existed, thereby outraging men whose consciences were clear, and gaining for himself the reputation of being an unprecedentedly bitter and corrosive cynic.

This, however, was a development of many years.

It started with the Chase trial, but did not come to fruition for a long time.

It was expedited, however, by the series of events which followed hard upon that trial, and culminated in Randolph's desertion of Jefferson. The harassed third President in 1805 and 1806 was engaged in the most delicate bit of international tight-rope walking ever imposed upon an American President. He was endeavoring to preserve his balance between England and France, that is to say, between William Pitt and Napoleon Bonaparte. He was well aware that to fight either of them was to court disaster on two sides—it would invite a military catastrophe and insure a financial catastrophe, for neutrality was as highly profitable to America then as it was between 1914 and 1917. The carrying trade of the world had fallen into American hands, and the country was reaping a golden harvest which had enabled the Jefferson administration to abolish the hated internal taxes, and was swiftly building up the ports along the Atlantic seaboard into large and wealthy cities.

But neutrality then, as always, was extremely difficult. If it was hard in the twentieth century,

when America's fighting strength was recognized as formidable and its financial power as literally incalculable, what must it have been a century earlier when the country's fighting power was negligible and its financial strength non-existent? Hardly a day passed without its report of some outrage to the American flag by one belligerent or the other. Mr. Jefferson unquestionably would have been driven into war by public opinion had it not been so difficult for the country to make up its mind which power to fight. England, having better control of the sea, naturally inflicted the larger number of the outrages on the high seas. When, some years later, she obtained absolute command of the sea, she did provoke a fight; but at this time the French were still able to do some violence to American commerce, and so to cool our enthusiasm for an attack on England. And there was then, as always, in the way of war against England that high appreciation of British institutions which John Randolph happily summed up in a famous passage in one of his speeches:

"We are enamored with neither nation. We would play their own game upon them—use them for our interest and

convenience. But, with all my abhorrence of the British government, I should not hesitate between Westminster Hall and a Middlesex jury, on the one hand, and the wood of Vincennes and a file of grenadiers, on the other. That jury trial which walked with Horne Tooke and Hardy through the flames of ministerial persecution is, I confess, more to my taste than the trial of the Duke d'Enghein."

But there was one complication which worried Mr. Jefferson more than all the cruisers. That was Florida. The territory was divided into two sections, Florida proper, and West Florida, that is to say, the territory along the Gulf as far as Mobile; the whole was referred to as "the Floridas." The Floridas were still in the hands of Spain, and by 1806 Spain, in turn, was to all practical purposes in the hands of France. Bonaparte had converted her into a mere appendage to his empire.

The American President's anxiety about the Floridas arose from the fact that they bounded Georgia on the south, and the inhabitants of south Georgia were not always amenable to the admonitions and directions of the government at Washington. Still less were the inhabitants of north Florida amenable to the authority of a Spanish Captain-

General stationed at Havana, Cuba. The border, in fact, made its own law and administered it according to its own sweet will. It takes no sage to deduce that out of such a situation trouble must come. It did come, in unlimited quantities. To Washington, from one side of the border, and to Havana, from the other, went a constant stream of blood-curdling tales of horror and terror. The Georgians and Floridians could, and did, narrate such atrocities as make the best efforts of the British propagandists of 1914 to 1918 seem, by comparison, pale and ineffectual. Many of the stories, indeed, were sober fact, for when a band of Seminole Indians made a raid into Georgia, a perfectly true account of the details makes sickening reading; and when a band of infuriated Georgia frontiersmen in reprisal raided Seminole villages in Florida, they did not act like Sunday School scholars. There were quite enough actual shootings, scalpings, arsons and ambuscades along the border to give rise to countless atrocity stories.

Mr. Jefferson saw that this sort of thing could not go on forever, and he saw also that the Spanish control of the Floridas was too weak to afford much hope of co-operation on that side in cleaning up the mess.

Evidently the United States had to assume jurisdiction, eventually; the question was, how to acquire it? Should war be declared against Spain, and the Floridas seized by military force? In that case, before the war was over it would have cost us at least ten times what the disputed territory was worth. Jefferson, being sane, preferred to exhaust the resources of negotiation before trying war. He therefore began to sound out Madrid on the subject of selling the Floridas, and got a response which encouraged him to go ahead. The discussion presently reached a stage at which Jefferson began to believe that the deal was as good as made, and then suddenly Madrid seemed to lose interest. The American agents could not discover where they had committed any blunder, yet it was impossible for them to make progress with the Spaniards. The negotiations bogged down.

After a while, though, through devious channels there came to the President a quiet suggestion which made him see a great light. His mistake in the negotiations had been in ignoring Prince Talleyrand. Napoleon's great minister had at that date plenty to occupy his attention, but Talleyrand never saw the day when he was too busy to pick up some loose

change if it might be obtained by means of a little polite blackmail. Therefore he spoke a quiet word to Madrid and the American negotiation instantly stopped. Then he spoke another quiet word to an unknown agent, and presently someone whispered in Mr. Jefferson's ear, or in the ear of the Secretary of State, Mr. Madison, that if the United States should see fit to make a slight contribution to the French foreign office, say about two million dollars, Madrid would surely regain her interest in the sale of Florida and it would probably go through.

Here, now, was a pretty kettle of fish for Mr. Jefferson's consideration. The proposal of Talleyrand was scandalous, outrageous, without honor, without decency, and worthy of any other terms of denunciation that may occur to you. But it was also practical. It would work. Mr. Jefferson knew that if we paid the international thug his price, we should be able to get Florida without firing a shot and without losing a soldier. And two millions, after all, were trifling as compared to the price of a war in which we might have to fight not Spain, alone, but the Napoleonic empire also. Mr. Jefferson decided to pay.

But Congress had to be consulted, and it was obviously not the sort of thing one could announce with a megaphone. So the President in his public message inserted a paragraph on Florida in which he confined himself to the announcement that negotiations for the purchase were continuing, and then began to apprise members confidentially of the precise turn which those negotiations had taken. He was probably already aware that, of all the members of Congress, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee was likely to prove his touchiest subject. At any rate, if he did not know it, he soon found out. The Secretary of State undertook to break the news one day when Randolph dropped into his office to see about a passport for a friend. The interview must have been one to absorb the attention of any philosopher, and to enchant any humorist. The little Secretary was one of the ablest Americans living, for all his lack of inches; and without doubt he made out the best case possible. But the tall Virginian before him had a mind as swift and keen as Madison's and the cleverest presentation of the matter could not long delay his apprehension of the main point, to wit, the blackmail involved.

Randolph's surprise mounted swiftly into wrath and that into towering disgust. It was then that he exploded into the great truth quoted previously: "I see I am not calculated for a politician!" and stalked out.

This was not encouraging. But Mr. Jefferson was in right up to the neck, now, and it was as easy for him to wade on through as to try to back out. Since the diplomacy of Madison had failed lamentably, the personal influence of Randolph's old friend, the Secretary of the Treasury, was requisitioned. Gallatin met Randolph outside the door of the committee room and offered him a paper headed, "Provision for the purchase of Florida." It was a clever move, for Gallatin was as close to Randolph as any man in public life, and closer than any other in the Cabinet. If anyone could induce him to present that paper to the Committee, Gallatin could; or so Mr. Madison and the President thought, not without reason. But personal considerations could not swerve the Virginian. The moment he read the title of the paper in Gallatin's hand, he asserted abruptly that he would not vote a shilling; and when the Secretary of the Treasury attempted to argue the point, Ran-

dolph declared roundly that the whole scheme was dishonorable and he proposed to have nothing to do with it. He added that the administration had taken good care of its own reputation by the public message, and was now attempting to browbeat Congress into assuming responsibility for playing Talleyrand's dirty game; but he, as a member of Congress, also had a reputation which he did not propose to sacrifice for the convenience of the administration.

This flattened Gallatin. He withdrew with his paper, and the administration gave up hope of John Randolph. So the President turned to Nicholas Bidwell, of Massachusetts, as his channel of communication with the House. This Bidwell, by the way, was the man with whom Gideon Granger hoped to supplant Randolph as House leader—a scheme doomed to wither in the bud, since Bidwell survived for one term only, and then was retired by his constituents. But he remained long enough to do this chore for the administration. The Committee was meeting in executive session, of course, and Bidwell explained the exact situation behind its closed doors; but the Committee stood with Randolph. The administration view prevailed in the House, however,

which also sat behind closed doors. The bill appropriating the money was passed and sent to the Senate.

Then Randolph calmly finessed, and wrecked the whole scheme. The rules of the House forbade him to disclose any business transacted in executive session, but rules are ropes of sand when it comes to binding such a man. He began to make speeches in which he hinted at what had been done in the secret session in such a way as to drive the public half mad with curiosity. He scattered broadcast such cryptic utterances as this:

"When the nation anxiously demands the result of your deliberations, you hang your head and blush to tell. You are afraid to tell. Your mouth is hermetically sealed. Your honor has received a wound which must not take air."

And then, referring to Great Britain:

"At this moment you have a negotiation with her government. With her you have not tried negotiation and failed, totally failed, as you have done with Spain, or rather France, and wherefore under such circumstances this hostile spirit to the one and this—I will not say what, to the other?"

Then, to give an accurate direction to the guesses which such obscure statements were sure to set flying:

> "I can readily tell gentlemen what I will not do. I will not propitiate any foreign nation with money. I will not launch into a naval war with Great Britain . . . and for this plain reason, we are a great land animal and our business is on shore. I will send her money, Sir, on no pretext whatever; much less on pretence of buying Labrador or Botany Bay, when my real object was to secure limits which she formally acknowledged at the peace of 1783."

Finally, under pretext of correcting the Journal, Randolph contrived to drag the whole business into the light. The result, of course, was disastrous to the negotiations. Talleyrand cynically disavowed the transaction, and Napoleon was so irritated he sent a sharp message to the American ambassador in Paris. Mr. Jefferson's neat little scheme to avoid a war was blown sky-high, and Florida remained in the ineffectual grasp of Spain a dozen years longer, until General Andrew Jackson marched an army in and took it, in 1817. Then, indeed, something had to be done, and John Quincy Adams, as Monroe's Secretary of State, managed to quiet the uproar and

secure the United States in possession of the territory.

So all that John Randolph's high moral indignation accomplished with regard to Florida was to perpetuate the border warfare for many years, until the territory was brought under the Stars and Stripes, not by bribery, indeed, but by violence bearing a remarkable resemblance to highway robbery.

But upon domestic politics it had a tremendous repercussion. The chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and administration floor leader in the House had bolted the party! More than that, he had made a complete and thorough job of it—he had leaped out of the ranks with such a series of blood-curdling yells as made the ears of the whole country tingle. He tore things wide open. For the first time he developed the full power of his genius for stinging characterization, and the lash stung the shoulders of his party associates on all sides. Of the House itself he said, "Like true political quacks, you deal only in hand-bills and nostrums." The administration in general he called, "the refuse of the retail trade of politics"; and of the President and the Secretary of State specifically he said, "Let not the master and

mate go below when the ship is in distress and throw the responsibility upon the cook and the cabin boy."

The helpless fury of the Republicans can be imagined. They had no man whom they could put up against Randolph in debate. Besides, he had the facts. Two or three members were so ill-advised as to try to say something in reply, but one experience was usually enough for such gladiators. Randolph transfixed them with a single lunge.

As for the red-headed mountaineer in the White House, he said nothing, at least in public, but quietly prepared to go ahead without the assistance of Mr. Randolph, of Virginia. Thomas Jefferson, indeed, had withstood the battering of a mightier than Randolph; the man who had survived the sledge-hammer blows of Alexander Hamilton might be stung, but could not be crippled, by the thrusts of John Randolph.

Historians have advanced all sorts of explanations, other than the ostensible one, for the quarrel of Randolph with Jefferson. They have laid it to envy, to jealousy, to sheer ill-temper on Randolph's part. Some have said that it was revenge—that he was infuriated because Jefferson had refused a re-

quest made by some of his friends—but without Randolph's knowledge—that the English mission be given him.

There may be some force in all these claims. The man was obviously complex. His acts are rarely to be explained in simple terms. Ordinarily they were the resultant of many forces, some of which he did not understand himself. But granting that Randolph was not as pure as driven snow, what is the matter with the ostensible motive? Why shouldn't he have regarded blackmail as dishonorable? Why shouldn't he have objected to being involved in an attempt to bribe France to bully Spain?

Ah, but men do not act after that fashion, cynical historians have replied. Men do not wreck their own careers, offend all the great powers of politics, incur lifelong enmities, and deliberately sacrifice all hope of obtaining high office for the sake of a point of honor. Generally speaking, that is true enough; but is it not possible that there might have been, once, an exception to the rule governing American politicians?

After all, Randolph did not so much desert Jefferson and the Republicans as find himself de-

serted by them. The party had a country to govern, and like every other idealistic party come into power, it found that in the practical business of governing compromises are inevitable, bargaining cannot be avoided, and that too rigid adherence to too idealistic standards of action results in futility. Therefore, some promptly, some more slowly, they all climbed down off their high horses. All, that is, except John Randolph. But he was the incurable romantic. He stuck to the saddle with the grim resolution of Don Quixote, and dashed furiously into the windmills.

Naturally, half the world believed him possessed of a devil and the other half that he had been born brainless. It is possible that he was possessed by devils of envy, jealousy and ill-temper; after a hundred years, who can say? But if all this be admitted, it does not altogether account for the man. There is Jefferson's curious tolerance to be explained. The long mountaineer had eyes which saw countless things hidden from his contemporaries. He saw something in Randolph that the Yazoo men never suspected and that Madison, not unnaturally, was unwilling to admit. This tortured, enigmatic and

fantastic figure represented more to Jefferson than insensate fury, or broad burlesque.

The Knight of the Mancha also appealed to his contemporaries first of all as a low comedian. But thoughtful men have always seen in the gaunt rider upon Rosinante something fine indeed; and Jefferson undoubtedly descried in this Quixote whom fate had loosed upon him that same grotesquely splendid faith in the ideal. Poor Randolph! Full of fine visions, he charged headlong into reality, ponderously swinging flail-like arms which hurled him to the ground with many a bump and bruise. Absurd, even ridiculous, his course appears now. As statecraft, it was unspeakable. But it wasn't craven, it wasn't ambiguous, it wasn't low.

Thomas Jefferson, painfully clearing up the wreckage Randolph left, doubtless smiled ruefully, but he said nothing.

CHAPTER IX

He Orders the Affairs of His House

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ABOUT this time an event occurred which gave to the private tragedy of John Randolph a bitterly ironical twist, a touch of the grotesque, almost a touch of burlesque. Nancy Randolph, who had been living at Bizarre, quit the house, presumably as the result of a quarrel with its master. Just before her departure she informed him, apparently for the first time, that the man who had seduced her ten years before was not Richard, but Theo, who had died a month or two later. A child had, indeed, been born at Glenlyvar, but it had been born dead, and Richard's only fault had been to conceal the fact in the vain hope of saving her reputation. Rather than expose her shame he had gone on trial for his life and had faced the possibility of death on the gallows without betraying her.

And this was the man whom, for ten long years, John Randolph had feared was a hound! All this

time Brother Dicky had been guilty of nothing worse than an exaggerated idea of chivalry, while John had been cherishing the horrible suspicion that he was an adulterer and probably a murderer. All this time Nancy had let him think it, while the poisonous belief corroded his heart and embittered his mind. He had known Brother Dicky all his life, he had loved him better than anyone else in the world, and yet he had doubted him—how John Randolph must have hated himself when he realized the fact.

But if he hated himself there is no word fit to describe his emotion toward this woman who was directly responsible both for Richard's disgrace and for John's treason to Richard's memory. Forever after the thought of her envenomed his mind, the sight of her seared his eyes, the mention of her sickened his soul. A few years later her sister, Judith, received Nancy again at Bizarre, whereupon John deserted the place and lived thenceforth at Roanoke, a desolate and dreary residence in the wilderness. Finally, a dozen years after the revelation of Richard's innocence, John's hatred of Nancy grew more powerful than his judgment, more powerful even than the instincts of a gentleman, and betrayed him

into the one act of his life that was unqualifiedly villainous. Nancy finally married Gouverneur Morris, then quite an old man, and removed to his home just above New York City. In 1815 Tudor Randolph, Richard's son, on his way home from Harvard was taken ill and was received in Morris' house, where he was attended with all courtesy and kept until he was fit to travel again. John and the boy's mother went up to fetch Tudor home, and there another encounter with Nancy revived all the bitter memories and fanned the old hatred into an intense flame. Back in New York, after the visit, some scandalmonger came to John with a huge budget of malicious gossip about Nancy's conduct as Mrs. Morris, and Randolph accepted it all as truth.

Then the ancient enmity crashed through all the inhibitions of decency and laid John Randolph low indeed. He sat down and wrote Morris, in the guise of the candid friend telling him evil news for his own good; he inclosed for Morris' perusal a letter to Nancy which revealed the old scandal and added to it every fabrication of evil minds since; he made an attack on Morris' wife which was as malignant as

all the ingenuity and resourcefulness of his mind could make it.

There is no way of palliating, extenuating or excusing this. It was dirty work, and it cannot be transmuted into anything else.

However, as it happened, it received its due reward. For once John Randolph of Roanoke met his match. Morris thrust the letter into a pigeon-hole, where it lay three months; then he showed it to his wife, who immediately answered it, but instead of sending the letter to Randolph, she distributed copies widely through Virginia. John Randolph by this time had a national reputation as a master of vituperation, but Nancy's letter showed that he might well have gone to school to her. The woman knew him so well that she was able to touch every weak point; and no fault, no frailty in his character did she fail to expose with merciless clarity; no blunder, no absurdity, no pettiness in his past life did she fail to mention, and to paint in the blackest of colors. One is compelled to admire the diabolical ingenuity of the attack as well as the vigor with which it is driven home. When Nancy laid down her pen, John Randolph was stripped of all decency, all

honor, indeed, of all humanity, and stood forth such a monster of iniquity as might appall generations to come. There is no need to waste sympathy on Nancy. She was perfectly capable of taking care of herself, and she did.

The incident is significant, however, for the light it sheds on the quality that was at once part of Randolph's strength, and his profound weakness, namely, his intemperance. It was just the quality that swept him into and through the Yazoo fight, regardless of its effect on his own or his party's fortunes. It was the quality that made him the scourge of rascals of high or low degree. It was the quality that made him fascinating to young men and the delight of all who admire a good show. It made him fearless and formidable and infinitely interesting. But it also led him into the indecency of the Morris letter, it led him into vicious and unwarranted assaults on honest men, and eventually it led him into personal habits which did no good either to his health or to his reputation.

However, this was not the side of John Randolph that his intimates saw. Through the first quarter of the new century his public life, while more spectacu-

lar, was not more crowded and laborious than his private life. Mention has been made of a Mrs. Dudley, who was befriended by Richard Randolph. She was a distant relative who had been left almost destitute by the death of her husband. Richard took her and her two children into his house, and John kept them there after Richard's death. He also had the care of Richard's sons, Tudor and St. George, and after some years he voluntarily undertook to look after the interests of two more orphans, sons of a friend of his early manhood.

Nor were these six fatherless children mere charges on his purse. To a much larger extent they were charges on his time, his ability, and his resourcefulness, for he was not content to be merely a provider for their material wants. To the best of his ability he tried to supply the parental care of which death had robbed them.

One of them, Theodore B. Dudley, preserved a great many of the letters which Randolph wrote to him over a period of twenty years, and after Randolph's death published them. By this act Dr. Dudley—Randolph gave him an education in medicine—repaid his benefactor, for the slender volume,

Letters to a Young Relative, has preserved to history a side of Randolph's character the existence of which many of his contemporaries never suspected. Most of these letters might serve as models to any father struggling with the problem of furnishing adequate guidance to an intelligent boy. They reveal a man intensely anxious to inculcate in the boy's mind every item of wisdom, prudence and good sense which the man had learned through hard experience. They are full of sagacity, full of keen observation of men and things, full of the best fruit of an extraordinary intelligence. At the same time they are stamped by the grace characteristic of John Randolph's writing. Many of them were written in the heat of his most furious political battles, yet their tone is curiously mild and mellow. In brief, the man went to almost infinite trouble to give the boy the best that was in him.

And it must not be forgotten that Dudley was only one of six whose interests he was guarding with equal assiduity. There is something profoundly moving in Randolph's laborious and endless efforts in behalf of other men's sons. One glimpses here something of the depth of the tragedy of his own depriva-

tion. With no children of his own, he was almost fiercely devoted to those whom fate threw under his protection. Pitifully he strove to create the illusion of fatherhood, pouring out recklessly his money, his time, and the best resources of his mind for the benefit of these foster children.

Richard's sons came first in his affections, of course; but here the sardonic fate that pursued him defeated his best efforts. The house of Randolph was doomed to extinction. Tudor died in early manhood, and St. George, deaf and dumb from infancy, finally went mad. But fearful as were these successive blows, they did not divert the man from his steadfast purpose to do the best he could for the others; and he did not relax his efforts for a moment until they had all reached years of discretion and were able to shift for themselves. Nor did he stop there. Even after they were grown men, his house, his purse and his energies were always at their disposal.

This certainly must be taken into account in any estimate of John Randolph. If he was capable of infamous hatreds, he was capable also of superb affections. If he could traduce a woman to her husband, he could also devote years, and exhibit infinite pa-

tience, in training up orphan boys in the way they should go.

But there is abundant evidence, aside from his relations to the boys, to show that John Randolph in private life was hardly recognizable for the terror of the political world. Contemporary records are full of testimony to his charm. It is a curious fact that nearly all the witnesses testify that this was based, not on brilliance alone, but also on what seemed to be a certain sweetness of disposition which was exceptionally winning.

Now if there is anything about John Randolph of Roanoke which is absolutely certain, it is certain that he did not possess a sweet disposition. On this point the evidence of Dr. Dudley is as conclusive as it is startling; Dudley remained with Randolph for many years, and certainly proved himself a friend. Yet in a note appended to one of the letters in the volume he published, he says,

> "The truth and beauty of the eastern allegory, of the man endowed with two souls, was never more forcibly exemplified than in his case. In his dark days, when the evil genius predominated, the austere vindictiveness of his feelings toward those that a distempered fancy depicted as

enemies, or as delinquent in truth or honor, was horribly severe and remorseless.

"Under such circumstances of mental alienation, I sincerely believe, (if it may not appear irreverent,) that had our blessed Saviour, accompanied by his Holy Mother, condescended to become again incarnate, revisited the earth, and been domicilated with him one week, he would have imagined the former a rogue, and the latter no better than she should be."

None the less, the impression of his charm remains; and Dudley himself, in the next paragraph, emphasizes it:

"On the contrary, when the benevolent genius had the ascendant, no one ever knew better how to feel and express the tenderest kindness, or to evince, in countenance and manner, gentler benevolence of heart."

Of this benevolence of heart, Dudley himself is one proof, and there were many others. Randolph was accused by others, and accused himself, of avarice. But it is a curious sort of avarice that charges itself with the support and education of six orphans, and the relief of countless relatives more or less indigent. John Randolph was a good business

man, and he hated being cheated. Perhaps at times he drove too hard a bargain, and on occasion his distaste for being robbed may have made him seem petty in the way he checked up accounts. But "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" was his delight, and St. James, at least, did not regard this as the mark of an avaricious man.

All the evidence supports the theory that Randolph's original endowment included a generous and sunny heart; and that the bitterness and gloom which encircled him later were developed by circumstances.

Among these, and one of the most powerful, must be counted his wretched physical health. He was what was then called a "delicate" child, probably under-nourished and nervously over-strained. When he grew older he fell victim to the malaria which afflicted a large part of the population of southern Virginia, and this, of course, contributed to his melancholy and his testiness. With the passage of the years he began, as old bachelors nearly always do, to pay more and more attention to his physical aches and pains. By brooding on them he enormously increased their intensity, extent and significance, and by experimenting continually with all sorts of nos-

trums he doubtless incurred others needlessly. The best medical practice of the day was decidedly heroic; a modern physician, contemplating the amounts of calomel and opium that John Randolph swallowed and the gallons of blood that he had drawn from his veins is puzzled, not by his failure to effect a cure, but by his failure to die long before his sixtieth birthday.

The astonishing command of language which served to make his speeches memorable served also to make his letters describing his symptoms veritable masterpieces of hypochondria. For instance, consider this report to Dudley:

> "It was, I believe, a case of croup, combined with the affection of the liver and lungs. Nor was it unlike tetanus, since the muscles of the neck and back were rigid and the jaw locked. I never expected, when the clock struck two, to hear the bell again; fortunately, as I found myself going, I despatched a servant (about one) to the apothecary for an ounce of laudanum. Some of this, poured down my throat, through my teeth, restored me to something like life. I was quite delirious, but had method in my madness; for they tell me I ordered Juba to load my gun, and to shoot the first 'doctor' that should enter the room; adding, they are only mustard seed and will serve just to sting him. . . . The operations of the liver have been irregular

and disturbed. I conceive the lungs to be affected by sympathy, with the other viscus. I have taken from five to ten grains of the hyper carbonated natron, every day, . . . my drink has been slippery elm tea and lemonade. Appetite for acids very strong. Severe pains in the fasciæ of the legs and the tendons, just above the outer ankle bone; also knees, &c. &c. I have taken from the first a pill of 1½ grains of calomel, about two, sometimes three times a week; and several doses of Cheltenham salts. I have used the volatile liniment for my throat and limbs; also gargles of sage tea, borax, &c."

This passage is far from being unique. Similar ones are scattered thickly throughout the correspondence of John Randolph over a period of thirty years. He asserted that he had not known a day of perfect health since childhood, and that the mere absence of pain had come to represent his highest good.

All this may be taken with a degree of skepticism. If Randolph had been as sick as he thought he was, he would have died a dozen times over. His morbid imagination had converted him into a hypochondriac of a very pronounced type. Yet there is no escaping the fact that the man was miserable a great deal of the time; and his physical misery, like his heartaches, unquestionably contributed to his ferocity when he

sallied out against his foes. The lash that was laid on Gideon Granger's back, for instance, was sped, in all probability, only in part by Yazoo; it is likely that it gathered speed on account of the state of the wielder's liver, and from his "severe pains in the fasciæ of the legs," and from the dreadful mental state that follows the reckless use of calomel, as well as from what Granger himself had done.

But it is all the more to his credit that in the face of this physical wretchedness Randolph could, and did, restrain his morbid tendencies in his home and in the presence of his friends to such an extent that what they recalled later was brilliance tempered with a certain sweetness of disposition.

CHAPTER X

He Fights, Is Cast Down, and Raised Again

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BUT he wasted no sweetness whatever on the desert air of the House of Representatives. On the contrary, as he saw himself more and more widely separated from what had been his party, he became more and more profoundly convinced that evil influences were drawing its members away. Magnificently blind as he could be to the realities of politics, even he was compelled to realize, eventually, that he was no longer a Republican. However, he was conscious that he had not altered his political principles a whit, and a Federalist he could never be. Therefore he proceeded to dub himself a *Tertium quid*—a singularly appropriate title for John Randolph, because it was drawn from a language which was precise, aristocratic, and beautiful, but dead, a language belonging to the past and by no means adaptable to the living present.

He was not mistaken in his belief that he had not

altered. He was not mistaken in his belief that it was the Republicans who had deserted him, not he who had deserted his party. But he was fatally mistaken in believing that the principles which he had espoused were eternal and that they could not be abandoned by any honest man. Therefore he was mistaken in believing that the Yazoo spirit, if not the Yazoo deal, was the whole, and sole, explanation of his party's change.

However, he had the courage of his convictions. As Jefferson's second administration wore toward its end and it became evident that the Secretary of State, "the great little Madison," was the chosen successor, Randolph's indignation mounted to a towering height. Madison was intelligent. Madison was a Virginian. Madison was a gentleman. Yet Madison had signed the report recommending compromise with the Yazoo claimants, and Madison had favored the bribe to Talleyrand. For Gideon Granger, Randolph had only contempt, but here was Madison playing politics of a type which Randolph could not, or would not, distinguish from Granger's type. Since he could not hold Madison in contempt, he developed a consuming hatred of him, and ex-

hausted every resource his ingenuity could suggest to prevent his election to the Presidency. He picked James Monroe as the candidate to beat Madison and worked desperately in Monroe's behalf. Randolph's stepfather, St. George Tucker, was a Madison man and would not be moved from his allegiance; wherefore Randolph quarreled with him and presently convinced himself that Tucker was none too honest. This suspicion was on the verge of lunacy, for all Virginia knew St. George Tucker, and Randolph's dark mutterings reacted against their author.

But Mr. Madison won easily, and Randolph was convinced that the country was in the hands, not, perhaps, of the Yazoo men, but of those who would tolerate Yazoo men in public life. The quarrel with the administration had halted his career as a planner and builder among statesmen, but this development effectually ended it. Thenceforward his effort in public life was not to erect a new nation better than any ever built before, but to save what he could from the wreckage of a nation which he believed already undermined by dishonesty. He became the national Cassandra, a gloomy prophet of the wrath to come.

And for the next few years there was, indeed,

much to justify his forebodings. The new President inherited Mr. Jefferson's position on the tight-rope, but he had less than Mr. Jefferson's immense balancing ability. England and France were still at each other's throats, and the position of the neutral grew momentarily more profitable and more difficult. All the cities of the east coast, and those of New England in particular, were suffering daily insults and daily piling up stupendous profits. Our ships were being stopped on the high seas; cargoes were being seized; seamen were being impressed; but the money was pouring in. Mr. Jefferson, and Mr. Madison after him, undertook to end the outrages but by methods which ended the profits, too. Non-Intercourse and then the Embargo took our ships off the seas. No more piracy could be practiced upon them then, but no more profits could be derived from them, either. Nor did the country have opportunity to blow off steam in a good fight. Everybody was dissatisfied. Everybody was sour.

Randolph, especially, was disgusted with the world. As regards the state of the national defense, he had at least one item of personal information which did nothing to cheer him. He had been fore-

man of the grand jury that indicted Aaron Burr for nobody seemed to know just what in 1806; and in the course of the inquiry he had come in contact with that extraordinary individual, General James Wilkinson, ranking officer of the American army. Randolph's opinion of this warrior is expressed in one line of a letter he wrote to a friend: "Perhaps you never saw human nature in so degraded a situation as in the person of W." An army commanded by a Wilkinson was, in Randolph's opinion, so nearly worthless that in 1810 he moved that the military and naval establishments ought to be reduced, remarking,

> "The belligerents of Europe know as well as we feel that war is out of the question. No, Sir! if our preparation was for battle, the State physicians have mistaken the state of the patient. We have been embargoed and non-intercoursed almost into a consumption and this is not the time for battle."

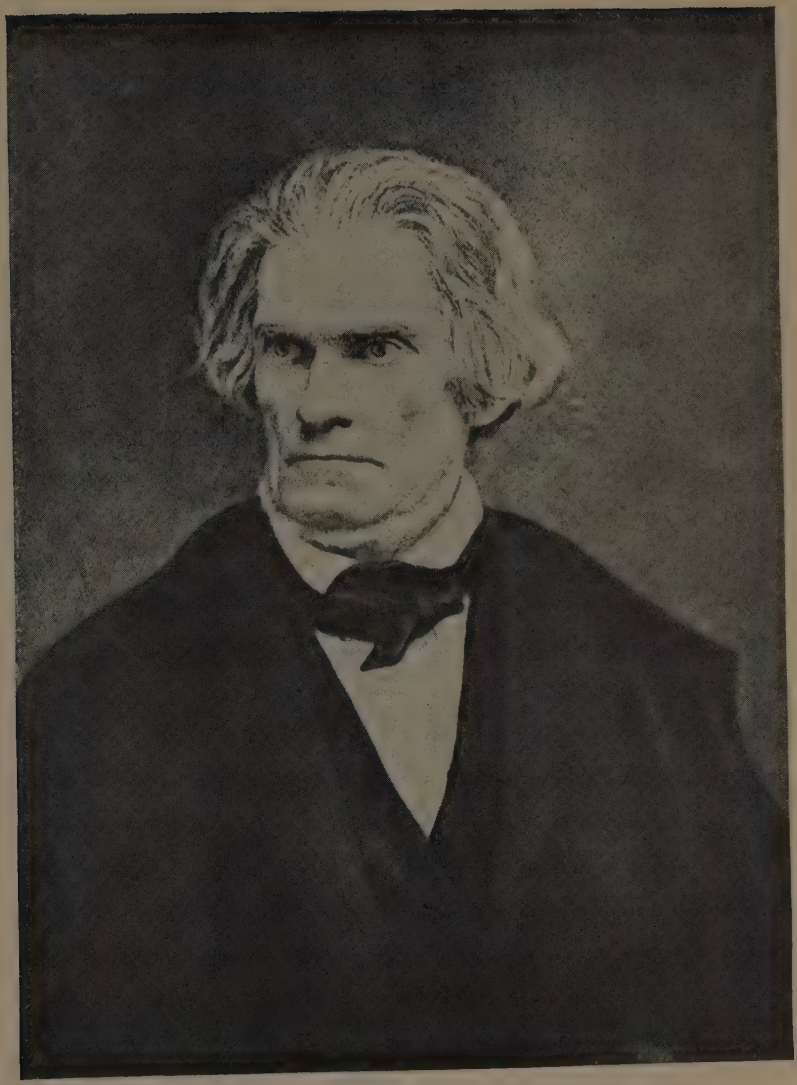
Just how this situation was to be remedied by reducing further the inadequate establishments it is difficult to imagine. But consistency was never Randolph's strong point—that is, consistency on the

surface. Certain ideas he held with appalling, indeed, fatal, tenacity; but his moods, and to some extent his attitudes, shifted with bewildering rapidity.

However, the whole situation was moving rapidly beyond his comprehension, not to mention his control. He understood that the nation was being moved by mysterious forces and concluded that they represented the processes of decay. Apparently it never entered his mind that they might be the processes of growth, and that a new and different nation was about to replace the confederation known to Washington, Hamilton and Jefferson. Yet in the Twelfth Congress two representatives of the new order appeared before him.

That Congress brought many new men to Washington. Among them were two of extraordinary intellectual power. One was a young aristocrat from South Carolina, reserved almost to the point of diffidence, yet, when, and if, one did come to know him, capable of arousing astonishing loyalties; handsome in an austere sort of way; not given to chatter, not obtrusive, and yet an intense and vibrant personality. His name was John Caldwell Calhoun.

The other was a breezy product of the Wild West,



An Aristocrat from South Carolina
(PORTRAIT OF JOHN C. CALHOUN BY HIX)

an open-hearted, open-handed youth, confident of himself, confident of the great destiny of this glorious country, confident of the general rightness of the best of all possible worlds. He was a plebeian, son of a small farmer in Virginia, but one of many Virginia boys who had migrated to Kentucky to grow up with the country. He was somewhat aggressive, and a bit noisy, but his gay good humor, his rampant friendliness, his fresh and tonic heartiness, were irresistible. His name was Henry Clay.

John Randolph of Roanoke observed these lads carefully, albeit somewhat grimly. It did not escape him that they were exceptionally able men, but it did escape him that their energy had behind it anything except their own exuberant youth. It seemed to him that they were the worst possible guides for a decrepit and decaying country. Their disgust with the inept and wabbling policy of the administration he shared, for the fact that it was, on the whole, a highly profitable policy made no more impression on him than on them. Non-intercourse and embargoes had damaged us, it is true, but the fact that the country had scrambled somehow out of the way of the wars that had been ravaging Europe for nearly twenty

years had brought us tremendous and unprecedented prosperity. Not only had the American mercantile marine grown immense, but the virtual impossibility of importing many kinds of European goods had greatly stimulated production, especially manufacturing, in America. The policy of neutrality had been difficult and at times undignified, but it had paid enormous dividends.

But this consideration moved neither Randolph nor the young enthusiasts. Calhoun, Clay and their following perceived nothing except the outrage, abuse and humiliation to which the country was being subjected. John Randolph perceived nothing which he considered greatly important except that the country was swinging to the support of Napoleon Bonaparte by attacking his enemy, England.

So the battle was joined, and John Randolph of Roanoke fought the greatest fight of his career against the war party. All through the winter of 1811-12 the combat raged in Congress, Randolph's assaults becoming only the more furious as the weight of the opposition bore him down. "I am unwilling to take Canada at the risk of the Constitution," he thundered; "to embark in a common cause

with France, and be dragged at the wheels of the car of some Burr or Bonaparte. For a gentleman from Tennessee, or Genesee, or Lake Champlain, there may be some prospect of advantage. Their hemp would bear a great price by the exclusion of foreign supply."

This stung, and they retaliated by charging him with being a hyphenated American, an Anglo-American. To these charges he retorted:

> "By whom are they made? By runaways, chiefly from the British dominions, since the breaking out of the French troubles. . . . I well remember flying with my mother, and her new-born child, from Arnold and Philips; and they had been driven by Tarleton, and other British pandours, from pillar to post, while her husband was fighting the battles of his country. The impression is indelible; and yet (like my worthy old neighbor, who added seven buckshot to every cartridge at the battle of Guilford, and drew a fine sight at his man) I must be content to be called a Tory by a patriot of the last importation."

The young men had marshalled and disciplined the House too well for Randolph's appeals to have much effect upon it. However, they indisputably did have some effect on the country, even in the garbled

accounts of them which the newspapers of the day published. Therefore, it was deemed advisable to shut him off, and at the end of May, 1812, a form of cloture was adopted to that end.

His counterstroke was to publish an open letter to his Virginia constituents, in which, after explaining why he could not address them from the floor of the House and protesting against the hitherto unheard-of practice of applying the gag to a member of Congress, he abandoned all restraints and attacked the war party with every weapon in his armament:

> "Before these pages meet your eye, the last republic of the earth will have enlisted under the banners of the tyrant and become a party to his cause. The blood of American freemen must flow to cement his power, to aid in stifling the last struggles of afflicted and persecuted man, to deliver up into his hands the patriots of Spain and Portugal, to establish his empire over the ocean and over the land that gave our fathers birth—to forge our own chains! And yet, my friends, we are told, as we were told in the days of Mr. Adams, 'the finger of heaven points to war.' Yes, the finger of heaven *does* point to war! It points to war, as it points to the mansions of eternal misery and torture—as a flaming beacon warning us of that vortex which we may not approach but with certain destruction. . . . It an-

nounces the wrath to come upon those who, ungrateful for the bounty of Providence, not satisfied with the peace, liberty, security and plenty at home, fly, as it were, into the face of the Most High, and tempt his forbearance."

To those who were preaching the war as a new Crusade, he devoted a blistering passage:

"These are no ordinary times; the state of the world is unexampled; the war of the present day is not like that of our revolution, or any which preceded it, at least in modern times. It is a war against the liberties and happiness of mankind; it is a war in which the whole human race are the victims, to gratify the pride and lust of power of a single individual. I beseech you, put it to your own bosoms, how far it becomes you as freemen, as Christians, to give your aid and sanction to this impious and bloody war against your brethren of the human family. . . .

"Ask yourselves if you are willing to become the virtual allies of Bonaparte! Are you willing, for the sake of annexing Canada to the Northern States, to submit to that overgrowing system of taxation which sends the European laborer supperless to bed, to maintain, by the sweat of your brow, armies at whose hands you are to receive a future master?"

Finally he delivered a vicious jab at the men who were fomenting the war spirit in Congress:

> "My friends, do you expect to find those who are now loudest in the clamor for war foremost in the ranks of battle? Or, is the honor of this nation indissolubly connected with the political reputation of a few individuals, who tell you *they* have gone too far to recede, and that you must pay, with *your ruin*, the price of their *consistency?*"

Right or wrong, the man who dares use such language when the country is aflame with the war fever is a bold man. Randolph was courting destruction, and knew it. Even as early as the campaign of 1811 bitterness against him was running high. Garland relates that at one of his campaign meetings a gang of toughs assembled on the outskirts of the crowd and Randolph was warned that they meant to make trouble; but his only acknowledgment of their presence was in the words—accompanied by a thrust of the long forefinger in the direction of the rowdies—"My Bible teaches me that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, but that the fear of man is the consummation of folly." He then proceeded with his speech, and was undisturbed.

It says much for the libertarian spirit of the age that Randolph did not go to jail for speaking his mind at such a time in such a manner. As it was, he

lost his seat in Congress in 1813; although even that triumph was not easily gained by the administration. In 1811 the effort to pull down Randolph had gone so far that John W. Eppes, one of the ablest administration leaders, actually removed his residence to Buckingham County in order to oppose Randolph. The effort failed that year, but in 1813, when the country had been at war for a year, it succeeded, and Eppes captured Randolph's seat for one term.

Certainly one can hardly blame the war party for making tremendous efforts to get rid of this gadfly. He could manufacture political aphorisms and apply them to the existing situation with horrible facility:

> "There is a fatality, sir, attending plenitude of power. Soon or late some mania seizes upon its possessors; they fall from the dizzy height, through the giddiness of their own heads."

Or, with equal facility, he could evolve sarcasm so apt and obvious that the dullest could not fail to perceive the taunt in it:

> "It seems this is to be a holiday campaign; there is to be no expense of blood or treasure on our part; Canada is

to conquer herself; she is to be subdued by the principles of fraternity. The people of that country are first to be seduced from their allegiance, and converted into traitors, as preparatory to making them good citizens. Although I must acknowledge that some of our flaming patriots were thus manufactured, I do not think the process would hold good with a whole community."

So they pulled him down, and he was left free to retire to Roanoke and observe the course of events as a private citizen. The war spirit was triumphant. With Clay and Calhoun riding the crest of the wave, the flood of enthusiasm for fighting swept everything before it, and John Randolph's arguments, expostulations and sarcasm were all alike drowned by a catch phrase, thundered from millions of throats. "Free trade and sailors' rights!" yelled the country, and plunged into the War of 1812.

Many years later a man as clever as John Randolph remarked that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but mostly by catch phrases"; and on occasion he is willing to die by them, as well. Certainly Americans died by this one, in enormous numbers and with monotonous regularity. That was pretty nearly all they did do through three sickening years

of what was less warfare than massacre of troops poorly trained, poorly equipped, and worse commanded. The fledgling navy did, indeed, score several deep marks upon the enemy. But the army, save for William Henry Harrison's obliteration of Tecumseh and Andrew Jackson's swift and effective campaign against the Creeks, all but fulfilled Randolph's most dismal predictions. England, still breathless after the semi-final grapple with Napoleon, dispatched to the American front little more than a punitive expedition; but the relatively weak British columns that did arrive roamed well-nigh at will through the country. The famous expedition against Canada fell almost of its own weight. The British hardly had to make an effort against it. Detroit was captured in a way that forced the Americans to courtmartial General Hull, their commander at that point. Finally the capital itself was seized with ridiculous ease by a British flying column, and the public buildings of which Washington was so proud were burned.

In the meantime, Randolph was living in the two log cabins in the wood which he dignified with the name of Roanoke, writing letters to his friends and,

when the enemy approached too near, making laudable, albeit futile, efforts to turn himself into a cavalry officer. The enemy's foray into the Chesapeake brought him to the colors along with the rest of the Virginia gentry, but his service was brief; after a week or two it became evident that the British were striking at Washington and Baltimore, not at Virginia, whereupon Randolph returned to Roanoke.

But the district was seeing more plainly every day that his had been the wise counsel with regard to the war. Virginia was pretty sick of the whole business by the time the next election approached, and Randolph's friends urged him to appeal to the electorate again. At first he resisted, saying that if the people of the district, whom he had served in Congress for fourteen years, had not known him in 1813, why should they know him better in 1815? However, it was not about Randolph, but about the war party, that the district had been learning for the last two years; and what it had learned was not at all to its liking. Bruce suggests another factor as adding to the general discontent; whatever may have been Representative Eppes' other qualifications, he was

not to be mentioned in the same breath with John Randolph as an entertainer. For fourteen years the voters had been constantly diverted, frequently charmed, and sometimes thrilled by their Congressman; but the worthy Eppes merely bored them. At all events, Randolph's objections were finally overcome, he announced his candidacy, and in the spring of 1815 was triumphantly re-elected.

But if his political star in the spring of 1815 was emerging from a temporary eclipse, any satisfaction Randolph may have experienced on that account was blotted out by that fact that at the same time the sun of the House of Randolph was going down in perpetual night. In 1814 poor St. George Randolph's mind collapsed, John says as the result of an unfortunate love affair. He had to be put under restraint, and it was evident from the beginning that there was very little hope of his recovery. Of all the descendants of the elder John this left only Tudor; and in the winter after calamity overtook St. George it became evident that Tudor was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis, and the chances of his survival were small. In a frantic effort to prolong his exist-

ence, his uncle started him toward the Riviera; but death moved faster than the traveler, and at Cheltenham, England, the last of this branch of the Randolphs died.

"Again all is chaos and misery," said John Randolph. "My faculties are benumbed; I feel suffocated."

His intimate friend, Francis Scott Key, wrote him a note of congratulation on his election. Randolph's reply did not exaggerate his emotions in the bitter words, "I look forward to the future in this world, to say nothing of the next, with anticipations that forbid any idle expression of exultation."

But he was once more a member of Congress. His rebellion against Jefferson had cut him off from his party. His rebellion against the War of 1812 had temporarily cut him off from his constituents. His fury against Nancy had alienated Richard's widow, to some extent, and that, combined with his quarrel with his stepfather, had cut him off from the happiness of the past. St. George's madness and Tudor's death cut him off from the happiness of the future. Still, he was once more a member of Congress, pre-

pared to make good the bleak prophecy he had made to Key two years earlier:

> "I have worried along, like a worn-out horse in a mail coach, by dint of habit and whipcord, and shall at last die in the traces, running the same dull stage, day after day."

CHAPTER XI

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FOR the next ten years he did continue to "run the same stage," although the presence there of John Randolph of Roanoke is sufficient assurance that it was no dull stage. He was definitely the man without a party, for the Tertium Quids were a faction, rather than a party. However, the Era of Good Feeling came along with President Monroe, and all clear-cut party distinctions were blurred beyond recognition. Practically all the world, and John Quincy Adams too, turned Republican, at least in name. Everyone was theoretically a Jeffersonian. Randolph himself was theoretically a Jeffersonian, although by this time he was convinced that Thomas Jefferson was not one.

In this state of general political fogginess, it was impossible to determine definitely any man's party affiliation. Randolph is an exception, simply because he did not acquiesce and join the one big party. He

was the leader of the opposition to the Era of Good Feeling. To be sure, he had supported Monroe ardently as against Madison; but Monroe in the end had gone over to the administration, thereby cooling Randolph's enthusiasm for him.

An authentic political party, however, is something more than merely a group of politicians. It must be a group of politicians who hold at least one significant political idea in common, and who actually work together to promote that idea. The Republican party in the Era of Good Feeling could not meet this test. A party which included James Monroe, J. Q. Adams, Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun obviously included men who held not one political principle in common; therefore, it was a highly dubious party. The Tertium Quids, on the other hand, did develop one idea which they held in common and on which they could always act together. Therefore, instead of saying that Randolph was the man without a party, one might come closer to the essential truth by asserting that he was the only important leader who did have a party.

This idea, of which Randolph presently became the great protagonist, is inadequately described by

the term States' Rights, but there is no other short phrase which conveys the thought any better. To call these men Strict Constructionists merely describes the technique which they employed in Congressional fights. To call them representatives of the slave power is to libel them, not merely grossly, but grotesquely. They were libertarians, but the word "libertarian" is a defaced coin, worn so smooth by careless handling that no one is any longer sure of its precise value.

The so-called States' Rights men were devoted to the states only in Congress; when they returned home, they were as suspicious of the state as they were in Washington of the federal power. It was not in Congress, but in a Constitutional Convention of the State of Virginia, that Randolph declared:

> "The principles of free government in this country . . . have more to fear from over legislation than from any other cause. Yes, Sir—they have more to fear from armies of legislators and armies of judges than from any other, or from all other, causes. Besides the great manufactory at Washington, we have twenty-four laboratories more at work; all making laws. . . . Among all these lawyers, judges and legislators, there is a great oppression on the people, who are neither lawyers, judges, nor legislators,

nor ever expect to be—an oppression barely more tolerable than any which is felt under the European governments. Sir, I can never forget that, in the great and good book, to which I look for all truth and all wisdom, the book of Kings succeeds the book of Judges."

This view doubtless was related, not remotely, to philosophic anarchism, but it was not provincialism, as some of Randolph's contemporaries thought, and still less was it commercialism, avowed mainly for the protection of slave property. It embodies a truth as old as government. Furthermore, in a government committed to the theory of democracy, it is a principle second only in importance to the basic principle of all government, the principle that order must be maintained. For it is only too clear that multiplicity of laws leads the people into confusion in which their power is easily stolen from them.

However, it is improbable that concern for the preservation of democracy actuated Randolph. If he cherished illusions about democracy, they were of the pessimistic type. If he erred, his error lay in thinking too little of it, not in thinking too highly of it. In 1815, when he returned to Congress, he was still convinced that the experiment had almost run

its course, and that nothing could preserve the republic for many years more. But he had no fears of its destruction from without. What he foresaw, with appalling clarity, was the erection of a huge internal power which should grind the states out of existence as sovereign powers; and he feared and detested this because he understood that the more ponderous the machine, the more difficult is effective control of its operations. He had no great confidence in the ability of the people to preserve their liberties as against their several states; he had none whatever in their ability to cope with the Federal power.

This attitude is more easily understood today than it was half a century ago; for the cycle of history has swung the doctrine of States' Rights into prominence again, although there is now no issue of chattel slavery involved. The fact is, it was involved only incidentally throughout the greater part of John Randolph's career. Not until 1831, when Randolph's life was almost ended, did the Abolitionist movement begin to assume formidable proportions; and it was Abolitionism which drove all slaveholders into the States' Rights camp.

Indeed, in 1815 and 1816, the prince of protago-

nists of States' Rights, after Randolph, was still on the other side. Calhoun was laboring, shoulder to shoulder with Clay, for the establishment of another national bank. The live-wire boys were in a delicate position. They had spurred the country into a war so disastrous that its gloom was merely pierced, not dissipated, by a few successful naval engagements and one brilliant exploit on land—the victory won by the wild militia commander, Andrew Jackson, at New Orleans. Clearly, then, it was time for the men mainly responsible for this unfortunate adventure to do something to re-establish their prestige. They turned to the reorganization and rehabilitation of the country financially.

One of the first items of their program was the establishment of a fiscal agency to handle the finances of the country, which were in a state so deplorable that they could hardly have been worse. The device they hit upon was the chartering of a new Bank of the United States. The first one, established in 1791, had passed out of existence in 1811, when its twenty-year charter expired; and one of the men who argued most convincingly in favor of its removal was Senator Henry Clay, of Kentucky. The

Senator, however, never was handicapped by want of agility, and in 1816 he argued as resolutely, and as successfully, on the other side. In the House his efforts were ably seconded by Calhoun, and together they put the charter through. John Randolph raved, but they were too strong for him.

Now Clay began the development of what was perhaps the most grandiose scheme ever undertaken by an American statesman of real importance. It was years after the bank fight before its main outlines were clear enough, even to him, to justify him in giving it a name; but from its inception John Randolph, although he may never have grasped all its implications, understood it well enough to realize that it was the negation of all his philosophy of government, and he fought it, tooth and nail. The real duel between Henry Clay and Randolph of Roanoke was the long fight over the American System. The exchange of shots in the Virginia hills was no more than the culmination of a battle that had raged for a decade.

In this greater battle, Randolph fell. His tactics were brilliant and frequently successful, but his major strategy was at fault. He was an excellent

parliamentarian and a marvelous debater, but he was neither an economist nor a geographer, and his opponent employed both economics and geography against him.

It is doubtless true enough that, measured by the standards of the schools, Clay knew little more about economics and geography than did Randolph. But Clay was a political genius. He had that sixth sense of supremely competent politicians which enables them to perceive that which they cannot explain, which makes them know what they have not learned, the thing which for lack of a better word we call vision. Clay was acutely aware of the continent lying behind the Blue Ridge mountains which bounded John Randolph's world. Both men realized that the new commonwealths forming in the West were not, and could never be, like the original thirteen colonies fringing the Atlantic seaboard; but realizing this difference, Clay rejoiced and Randolph shivered.

Clay's frustration and embitterment were still far in the future when he and Randolph began their battle. The Kentuckian was still a buoyant soul, optimistic, confident, gay and good-humored. He was,

in truth, a little too sociable for his own good; his prowess as a gambler and drinker startled Washington even in that day, when the conventions regarding such indulgences were far less strict than they are now. But Clay drunk was an abler man than most of his contemporaries were when cold sober; and when he was at his best, his ideas ran far ahead not of his generation, only, but of his generation's grandchildren also.

The impression is widespread that Clay's American System involved principally a protective tariff and internal improvements, but that is only proximately true. These were the logical first steps in his plan, but they were only the first steps in a plan that covered an immense distance. Clay foresaw and endeavored to expedite the development of the United States into a continental power, and he foresaw likewise a development of South America which is yet in the making. His American System comprised both continents. It envisaged an alliance of the entire Western Hemisphere under the leadership—he did not go so far as to say the sovereignty—of the United States. But let him describe it in the words he used in 1820:

> "It is in our power to create a system of which we shall be the center, and in which all South America will act with us. . . . In relation to South America, the people of the United States will occupy the same position as the people of New England do to the rest of the United States. We shall be the center of a system, which would constitute the rallying point of human freedom against all the despotism of the Old World. Let us no longer watch the nod of any European politician. Let us become real and true Americans, and place ourselves at the head of the American system."

A truly imperial concept was this. The ambition of Napoleon Bonaparte soared no higher, for the hegemony to which Clay invited the American people was, in effect, the hegemony of the world. But the man was a great deal more than merely a magnificent dreamer. He understood clearly the great difficulty facing him. Before he could have an American System, he must first have Americans, and they were still exceedingly rare birds. There was, for example, John Randolph of Roanoke, with not the faintest intention of becoming an American, but sourly intent upon remaining a Virginian, from hatband to sole-leather. Therefore Clay, as the first step toward his world-empire, bent his energies to the

welding of the states into a genuine nation. At this impossible task he frittered away the rest of his life. Four years of war and fifty years of less formal strife were to be required, after he had passed from the scene, to accomplish the task. And now that it seems to be fairly well done, many men are asking themselves if old John Randolph was not at least partly right in his belief that the stones of the nation would be cemented in the blood of liberty.

For as Clay's ideas developed they proved more and more horrible to John Randolph. Every statesman of the period was necessarily influenced profoundly by the prodigy of that age, Napoleon; but where Clay saw the empire, Randolph saw the emperor. When Clay exulted in the thought that the American people would rule the world, Randolph trembled at the thought of who might rule the American people. Where Clay believed that the American System would "constitute the rallying point of human freedom," Randolph foresaw that with the American System established there would be no human freedom left to rally.

Each was romantic. Each departed from reality according to his temperament. Clay overlooked the fact

that the foundation of his American empire could hardly be constructed with the labor of a hundred years, and that to brandish the weather-vane ere the foundation had been laid was folly. Randolph overlooked the fact that geography and economics were with Clay, and that the operation of these forces was as inevitable as it was slow. Randolph's ideal of the good life was that of the English country gentleman, and it was impossible for him to understand that the English country gentleman was a figure of the past in America. He had no adequate conception of the size of the country, and still less of the enormous modification of ancient rules the development of a virgin continent involves.

For example, he had liberated the family fortune of a heavy debt and had largely increased it by rigid adherence to the old-fashioned virtues of thrift and industry, and it never occurred to him to doubt that these were to be the mainstays of successful men for all time. His dread of debt amounted almost to mania. "Mr. Speaker," he exclaimed from the floor of the House once, "I have discovered the philosopher's stone! It is this, Sir: pay as you go! Pay as you go!" It was incomprehensible to him that great

fortunes were to be made by going into debt. Following his mother's advice, he kept his land, and his land kept him. But he did not found one of the great American fortunes; that was reserved to men who had the skill and the courage to borrow wisely.

So for year after year the battle raged between the man of the past and the man of the future; while between them shrewd men of the present collected the emoluments and the gaudy offices. On Randolph's part it was conducted with a brilliance unrivalled on the floor of Congress before or since; but also with an eccentricity that as time passed showed increasing evidence of mental aberration. The fiend that had pursued him for many years, as he described it, was close on his heels now. In 1815 Tudor, last of his house, had died in England. Early in 1816 Randolph buried Tudor's mother, widow of Richard and, in spite of the quarrels over Nancy, in some sense the feminine head of his household. This double blow, added to the madness of St. George, staggered him. St. George had fallen victim to a religious mania, and for a time it appeared that his uncle might go the same way. For a year or two after Judith Randolph's death he fell into a condition of despair

which extorted from him letters to his spiritual advisers, especially Francis Scott Key, which might have been written by John Bunyan at his gloomiest. Key and several Virginia ministers labored mightily, however, and at length put Apollyon to rout. John Randolph, in the language of the camp meetings, "came through" after a terrific struggle, and the fear of eternal damnation lessened its hold upon him.

His conversion lasted throughout his life, too, at least to the extent of enabling him to hold pious discourse for the rest of his days. However, under excitement he would lapse into another manner of speech, sometimes at embarrassing moments. Once when a clergyman had just finished a sermon to his slaves, Randolph asked permission to add a few words and began to talk on the inefficacy of faith without works. At last, his fervor increasing, he singled out a young buck who had been particularly emphatic with his *amens*, and shaking that famous long forefinger at the Negro, said, "Here is this fellow, Phil. In the meeting on Sunday he is the foremost man to sing and shout and get happy, and, on Sunday night, he is the first man to steal his master's

shoats—the damned rascal!" When the scandalized cleric protested, Randolph floored him with a series of inquiries in the Socratic manner. Was not theft a deadly sin? Did not sinners stand under the condemnation of God? Was not a man condemned by God most literally damned?

But if the efforts of the godly succeeded in exorcising the fiend at this time, it was but a temporary victory. The religious crisis passed in the experience of conversion and reconciliation with God in the bosom of the church—but the Church of England, mind you, not the Episcopal Church, which Randolph denounced as an American upstart—yet within a year or two, the fiend was grinning over his shoulder again. Once more tragedy was the immediate cause of the crisis. Randolph was devoted to Stephen Decatur, the sailor and scourge of the Barbary pirates; but in 1820 Commodore Decatur engaged in a duel with another naval officer and was killed. Randolph unquestionably was on the verge of a nervous collapse anyhow, and this tragic event set him off. At the funeral he conducted himself in extraordinary fashion. John Quincy Adams says, in his *Memoirs*,

"John Randolph was there, first walking, then backing his horse, then calling for his phaeton, and lastly crowding up to the vault, as the coffin was removed into it from the hearse—tricksy humors to make himself conspicuous."

Unfortunately, it was more than "tricksy humors" —the man was mentally irresponsible. He walked into his bank to make out a check, refused the black ink provided and demanded red, saying, "I now go for blood." He then asked the cashier to sign his name for him, and when that was refused, wrote, "John Randolph, his X mark," the form in which an illiterate signs documents. With the arrival of summer he recovered his poise, but in the next year, 1821, he suffered another attack, in the course of which he wrote a will which was later to be the basis of a long lawsuit. In this will of 1821 he revoked an earlier will by which he had freed all his slaves and provided for their settlement outside the State of Virginia. A jury eventually held that he was insane in 1821 and established the earlier document as binding; so the slaves were freed.

Today we employ milder terms to describe similar conditions. The very complexity of the language of psychiatry makes the layman wary in his choice of

words and so has drawn a wide distinction, in popular opinion, between "nervous cases" and straight-out lunatics. But a hundred years ago a man was regarded as either sane or insane; and the jury in the Randolph will case was greatly puzzled by what seemed to them a contradiction in the testimony of witnesses who swore that when Randolph was at his worst, his conversation was frequently as brilliant, as keenly intelligent, and as charming as ever.

And in these years the House of Representatives was as sadly bewildered as was the jury later. Was this incredible figure madman or prophet? As John Randolph attained middle life and went forward toward age, he became more and more amazing in every manifestation. A visitor to the gallery of the House described his surprise at first seeing him. Nothing of great importance was transpiring on the floor, and the visitor's eye mistook for a waiting attendant a slender figure lolling in a seat at the rear of the room, his feet, encased in riding boots, thrown negligently upon a desk, and his hands toying with a crop. But presently the lad—the visitor judged him to be anywhere from sixteen to twenty—heaved himself to his feet, caught the Speaker's eye, spoke half

a dozen words cutting sharply through a parliamentary tangle to the heart of the matter, and then moved adjournment. Obviously the boy was thoroughly at home in the House. The visitor asked his name, and gasped when he was told that the speaker was "the great Mr. Randolph of Virginia."

John Randolph's face and figure, observed at a little distance, retained a boyish appearance simply because he was beardless and slender. But at close range one observed that the face was criss-crossed by a multitude of tiny wrinkles, and the shoulders exhibited the hunched appearance characteristic of victims of pulmonary tuberculosis. The appearance of youthfulness was only one of the mockeries with which his sardonic fate afflicted him.

His appearance was scarcely more bewildering to his contemporaries than was his style of oratory. They felt, but for the most part were incapable of analyzing, its power. It was the day of turgid eloquence, of rolling periods, of sonorous antiphonies, of gorgeous grandiloquence, the sort of thing at which Thomas Hart Benton was adept and Daniel Webster great. But all this was the reverse of a Randolph speech. He did interlard his utterances

with Latin and Greek quotations, but this was the sole concession he made to the gallery's delight in mere sound. For the rest, his diction was so simple that in that day of the ornate it seemed positively austere; and his delivery was still simpler. One listener after another has written the same comment, namely, that when Randolph stood up and addressed the chair, he did not seem to be speaking at all, but merely conversing with the presiding officer. His voice has sometimes been described as shrill, but the great bulk of the testimony is to the effect that it was merely high-pitched—a very different thing. It was certainly not unpleasant, and apparently it was seductively musical; at any rate, men were able to listen to it hour after hour without suffering.

And as the years passed the House had to listen to it for innumerable hours. The gentleman from Virginia was frankly of the opinion that the less the House legislated, and particularly the less it legislated in the direction of the American System, the better for the country. So he was an undisguised obstructionist. But he was exasperatingly clever. Any Congressional filibuster can talk endlessly on a point of no importance, but the ordinary filibuster soon

exhausts his audience and eventually brings down upon his own head the condemnation of public opinion. John Randolph, however, could discuss "trifles light as air" for three consecutive hours, and while the opposing leaders would fume, neutral members and the occupants of the gallery would find it three hours of sheer delight. Of course he did not stick to the subject. He chased every intellectual butterfly that fluttered across his path. He led his hearers on excursions through the history of every country in the world, through literature, ancient and modern, through all the arts. He beguiled them. He amused them. He enchanted them. And finally, after taking the longest possible way round, he would leisurely return to the subject, perhaps to lay its profoundest intricacies open with a single phrase.

What the maddened leaders of the other side saw in this was three hours wasted. But what the bystanders saw in it was three hours of high entertainment. Hence they could not be persuaded to resent John Randolph's talking as they resented ordinary filibustering. It was impossible to do anything with him because many of the members who consistently voted against him, nevertheless enjoyed the show he

put on, while the public reveled in it. Besides, while Randolph spoke frequently and at length, so did others, and there is no record that he ever equalled the performance of Benton, for instance, who once spoke four days—a speech which, as Randolph remarked, consumed one more day than the French Revolution of 1830.

Nevertheless, there was more than partisan prejudice in the dubiety with which men regarded this strange, fantastic figure. There was something distinctly uncanny about him. The fine, hazel eyes were instinct with life even when they hardened to points of brilliance as his "rich soprano" (so one hearer described his voice) poured a flood of biting sarcasm upon some unfortunate opponent. The eyes were warmly alive when he pleaded for old Virginia in danger of some real or fancied wrong. But while the eyes were alive, the rest of him was distinctly sepulchral. About this tall, bony figure, which frequently entered the House booted and spurred, sometimes with a riding whip, there was more than a suggestion of the Rider of the Pale Horse.

To Henry Clay, at least, it was patent that Randolph had turned directly away from the road

which would lead the nation to more abundant life. Clay's imagination leaped immense chasms and soared to unattainable heights, ignoring obstacles at hand; nevertheless, he looked toward the centuries that were to be, while Randolph as steadfastly gazed at the past. When Clay cooked up any grandiose scheme, Randolph shrieked, "There is death in the pot, compound it how you will!" And for a time the word of Randolph prevailed. Little by little, the statesmanship of the South swung to his view and adopted his policy. Eventually the South Carolina aristocrat, become a great man now, fell in with that policy, and carried it on after Randolph had gone. And it led to Appomattox.

For the States' Rights doctrine that John Randolph preached was not a living policy, continually changing, continually shifting, continually adjusting itself to the exigencies of a country expanding swiftly and enormously. He did not know how to be supple and sinewy, yielding a point here to gain a more important one there, conquering by using the strength of his enemy. His only plan to conquer was by being rigid; and little by little his rigidity took on the aspect of *rigor mortis*.

He had no confidence in the men of the future. He was willing to trust them with nothing. His confidence was placed in the dead men who had written the Constitution, and in them only. He demanded the enforcement of the compact between the Original Thirteen to the letter, and would tolerate nothing beyond it. He boasted that he had voted for but one amendment to the Constitution, and had never voted for the admission of a new state. He would have no Statute of Mortmain. Upon the abounding life of the new country he strove to fix the dead hand of the colonial revolutionists, and the prospect that this might wreck the union deterred him not at all; nor did it deter those who continued his work after him until, when Randolph was thirty years dead, the harvest of this labor was found in his Virginia fields in windrows of corpses.

Having seen how it all came out, we are enormously wiser about the events of the past than were the men who lived through them. It is easy enough, now, to identify the performance by which Randolph fascinated the first third of the nineteenth century, to read aright the omen that only vaguely disturbed the men of the time. The show that this

cadaverous figure staged in Congress, with its touch of the unearthly, its taint of the macabre, and its enthralling charm, was the Dance of Death.

CHAPTER XII

He Meets a Gentleman with a Pistol

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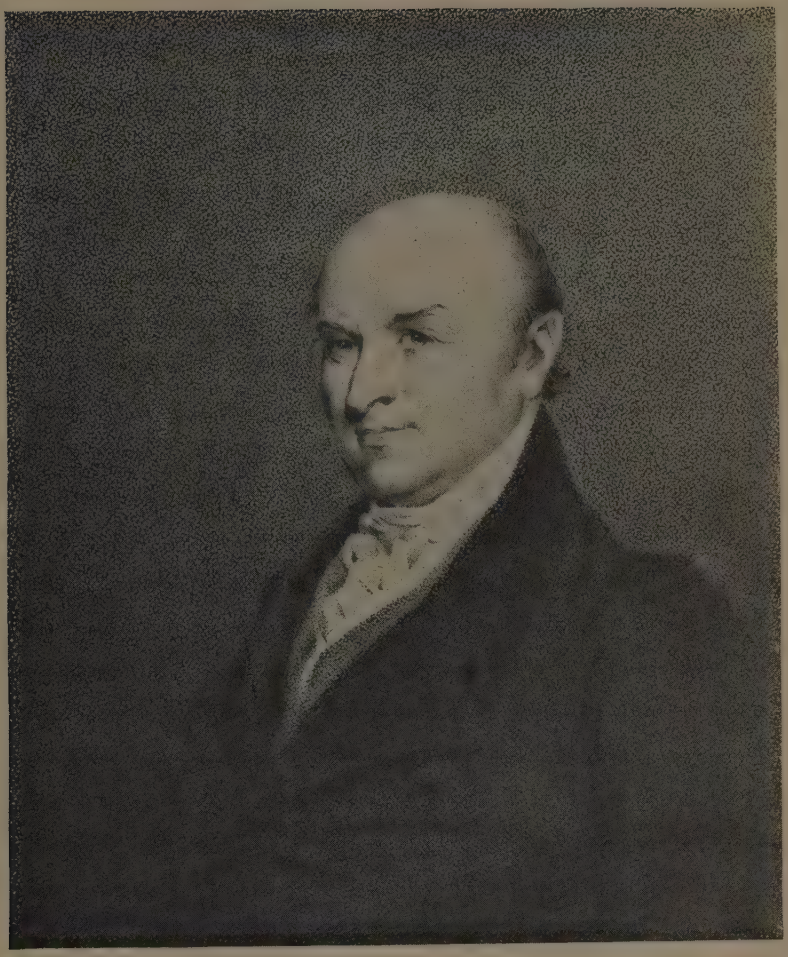
IN 1822 and again in 1824 John Randolph went to Europe, and the cordial enthusiasm of his welcome in England, where he became something of a social lion, served to strengthen his belief that the English social order was the best model for American development. He was no monarchist, but he did believe with all his heart in the rule of the gentry, and England, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, was organized very much to his taste.

The social organization of Virginia then bore enough resemblance to that of England for Randolph to persuade himself of their essential identity. The plain fact that it was no more possible to erect another England in Virginia than it was to erect one in Baluchistan quite escaped him. Furthermore, he disliked the French. So he returned from his travels with all his old prejudices intensified, more than ever convinced that true patriotism lay in rigid ad-

herence to the old order, and more than ever opposed to Clay's American System.

He returned to find the Era of Good Feeling blown skyhigh by an explosion of ill-feeling which rocked the country. He landed in New York December 2, 1824, when the result of the Presidential election was still in doubt, but when it was already becoming plain that neither Jackson, Adams, Crawford nor Clay would receive the necessary majority in the electoral college. This was, in itself, a matter of no great moment to John Randolph; he was nominally a Crawford man, but his enthusiasm for the Georgian was mild. Jackson he knew little about, but Clay he distrusted and Adams he disliked wholeheartedly. The elimination of Clay before the election came to the House of Representatives filled him with satisfaction, but this satisfaction was short-lived. Crawford, also, had been eliminated, not by law, indeed, but by a stroke of paralysis, so that the contest in the House really lay between Adams and Jackson; then Clay threw his strength to Adams, and Randolph and Daniel Webster, the tellers, duly announced the election of "the cub" who was, in the estimation of the member from Virginia, "a greater



"Blifil"

(PORTRAIT OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS BY GILBERT STUART)

bear than the old one." This was the fortune of war, for Clay had every reason to support Adams as against Jackson, and Randolph had no plausible pretext for resenting it. However, no sooner was the new President chosen than he offered Clay the portfolio of State, and Clay accepted. Since the Secretary of State was then regarded as the logical next candidate for President, Jackson's friends immediately suspected a deal and raised the cry of "bargain and corruption."

In view of Randolph's previous opinion of the two men involved, it was inevitable that he should accept the Jacksonian theory; and he opened fire on the administration from its first hour. However, he fired from the other end of the Capitol, for he was prevented from attending the first sitting of the new House when it met in December, 1825; and on the 17th of that month he was elected to the Senate to fill out an unexpired term. So it was Senator Randolph who turned upon President Adams and Secretary Clay all the batteries of criticism, sarcasm, excoriation and plain vituperation of which he was master. In this campaign he was very greatly assisted by the President, who soon proved himself as

much a Federalist at heart as his father, "the sedition-law President," had been. By this, Randolph's criticisms were given a basis of reason.

Soon, however, they began going beyond all reason, and it became plainer and plainer that the familiar fiend was treading on his heels again. His harangues in the Senate became so wild and disordered as to make it clear that the man's mind was seriously affected. John Randolph was suffering another nervous breakdown. The physical machine, as a matter of fact, was nearly worn out. He had suffered for many years from some form of digestive disturbance that frequently prostrated him completely and almost never left him free from pain. It is possible, too, that by 1825 the inroads of tuberculosis had begun. This is the disease that eventually killed him, and frequently it takes many years for tuberculosis to finish off a man who lives much out of doors. Randolph was so much the horseman that Bruce calls him almost a centaur; he was fond of hunting; and he maintained active supervision of three great plantations when he was in Virginia; which is to say he spent by far the greater part of his life, except when in Washington, in the open air. Such a man may live

with tuberculosis for a great many years, so it is far from impossible that John Randolph may have been suffering from it in 1825 and 1826.

Whatever the cause, his general physical condition was deplorable, and it was reflected in his mental disturbance. Yet when he was at his worst, when it was impossible for his mind to follow any coherent line of reasoning for more than a few minutes, although he insisted on talking for hours, when his eccentricities of dress, of manner, and of conduct were scandalizing Virginia, even then his deliverances had a quality that commanded attention and aroused delight. Frequently he would rise to speak on a bill before the Senate and, after his opening remarks, never mention that bill or anything pertaining to it for hours, yet he never bored his audience—always excepting those in the audience who had business of their own which they wished to bring before the Senate, and these unfortunates were infuriated rather than bored.

As it had been in the House, so now it was in the Senate—the responsible leaders writhed, but others found in the interminable speeches of the Senator from Virginia a rare sort of intellectual excitement.

They constituted a kind of mental lottery in which at any moment the listener was likely to draw a prize in the nature of a saying which he would treasure in his memory for years. It might be a bit of razor-edged sarcasm, a momentary flash of wit, a happy allusion to the classics, or a happier characterization of some man in public life, but whatever it might be, it was certain to sparkle. The Senator would ramble on, talking of everything in general and nothing in particular, until the Senate began to sink into lethargy; then, suddenly, a single sentence, possibly a single phrase, would blaze and listeners would sit up with a jerk. There would be a ripple of laughter or applause, perhaps only a sharp hiss of indrawn breath; and almost before realization struck home to the audience, the speaker would have gone on to something else. However, the Senate learned that it dare not turn a deaf ear to John Randolph, because if it failed to listen to him it was sure to miss something worth hearing.

He spoke once of "the glorious privilege of finding fault—one very dear to the depraved condition of human nature." This privilege he exercised to the full, Heaven knows, but to the vast entertainment

of others than the objects of his attacks. Mention has been made of his description of Ritchie's seven principles, to wit, the five loaves and the two fishes. He could make an effective pun, as when he said of Robert Wright and John Rea (Ray) that the House possessed two anomalies: "A Wright always wrong; and a Rae without a light." He spoke of a certain pedantic individual's mind as like a parcel of land he knew, poor to begin with and rendered more barren by too intensive cultivation. When Richard Rush was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, Randolph's comment was, "Never were abilities so much below mediocrity so well rewarded; no, not when Caligula's horse was made Consul."

Once a new member, elected to fill a vacancy caused by death, made a furious personal attack on Randolph, and to the amazement of all present there was not a word in reply. But two or three days later, while discussing a bill in which the dead man had been much interested, Randolph casually remarked that this bill had lost much in the death of his dear friend ——, "whose seat remains vacant."

Martin Van Buren, of New York, perhaps the first "easy boss" in our political history, had earned

in his state the soubriquet of "The Red Fox"; John Randolph dragged to light the same characteristic when he described Van Buren as one who habitually "rowed to his object with muffled oars."

"An English noble has but one son," said he, referring to primogeniture; "all the rest are bastards."

"Asking one of the States to surrender part of her sovereignty is like asking a lady to surrender part of her chastity," illuminates the fundamental principle of States' Rights better than a volume of labored argument.

"Denouncing me? That is strange. I never did him a favor" is as illuminative of Randolph's experience of the world.

Of course such a man was the delight of all the story-tellers in Washington, as in Virginia. The wags had for years been giving swifter currency to their gibes by ascribing them to John Randolph; and eventually it came to pass that when anything good was said it was assumed to be a quotation from the master of Roanoke. "All the bastard wit of the country has been fathered on me," he complained once. Even his legitimate brain-children were frequently painted and bedizened by others, as witness his re-

mark to his servant on that occasion when he watched the sunrise from the Peaks of Otter; greatly impressed by the spectacle, he counseled the man never to believe those who say there is no God. But the yarn-spinners would have it that he remarked, "John, when you go down into the world, if you hear anyone say there is no God, tell him I say he is a liar!"

So reliable an authority as Bruce, however, testifies that one of the most famous of the John Randolph stories is authentic. That one deals with the occasion when he met an enemy on a narrow sidewalk in Washington. The enemy, halting in the middle of the walk, announced belligerently,

"I never step out of my way for puppies!"

"I always do," said Randolph instantly, stepping nimbly aside. "Pass on."

But great events were in preparation as the old man droned, and flashed, and droned again in the Senate. For he was an old man now. As years are measured, he was only in the fifties, but illness had wasted him and the defeats and frustrations of his maladjusted life had borne him down until he appeared to carry at least twenty years more. At a little

distance, he still bore the appearance of a slender youth; but to the observer this merely emphasized the appearance of age which he presented at close range. It was not youth. It was a mockery of youth, and a grisly mockery.

The reality of youth was with the exuberant westerner, Henry Clay. He was Randolph's junior by only four years, but time and circumstance had not subjected him to the battering which the Virginian had received. The world had treated Henry Clay well, when all things are taken into consideration. True, the Jacksonians were raising a thunderous chorus of "bargain and corruption" in connection with his acceptance of the office of Secretary of State from the hands of Adams; and in addition to this bellowing campaign there was also a whispering campaign against Clay, based on his drinking bouts and his heavy gambling. But the charges of the Jackson partisans could be explained by politics; and the charges of loose living had not been brought into the open by any reputable man. Mr. Clay could shrug his shoulders and proceed without giving too much attention to his enemies. He was allied with the most intensely respectable faction in American politics,

that represented by an Adams, of Massachusetts. He was one of the insiders of an oligarchy that had succeeded in controlling the country ever since the days of Thomas Jefferson. In 1826 it seemed impossible that anything very disagreeable could happen to him.

But a new polity and a new science of politics were in the making around the strange figure of the frontier general, Andrew Jackson. Clay observed it, and Randolph observed it; but, curiously enough, both these keen-sighted politicians completely misconstrued its significance. Jackson represented democracy and the expanding West. He owed no allegiance to any of the original thirteen colonies; he had not striven for North Carolina, whence he came, nor for Tennessee, whither he went, but for the United States. Carolinian by birth, Tennesseean by residence, he had fought against the British for the deliverance of Louisiana, and against the Spanish for the deliverance of Georgia. When he spoke of his country, he did not refer to any one of the commonwealths which made it up, but to them all; and he regarded the federated group of states as a nation. His statecraft was the logical basis of the American System. Yet Clay fought him.

On the other hand, Randolph supported him, although he was the embodiment of all the Virginian most dreaded and detested. He represented the militant, enlarging West, which was destined to overwhelm Virginia. He represented that nationalism which was destined to justify the reduction of the original thirteen states from sovereign powers to mere fragments of a nation. He represented the irruption into politics of commoners, of landless men, of ignorant men, whereas Randolph believed that government could be safely entrusted only to the hands of the landed aristocracy. In 1822 he had said,

> "When I hear of settlements at the Council Bluffs, and of bills for taking possession of the mouth of the Columbia River, I turn not a deaf ear but an ear of a different sort to the sad vaticinations of what is to happen in the length of time, believing, as I do, that no Government, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, can be fit to govern me or those whom I represent. There is death in the pot, compound it how you will. No such government can exist because it must want the common feeling and common interest with the governed which is indispensable to its existence."

Time has disproved the theory, but only because it introduced into the equation factors of which John

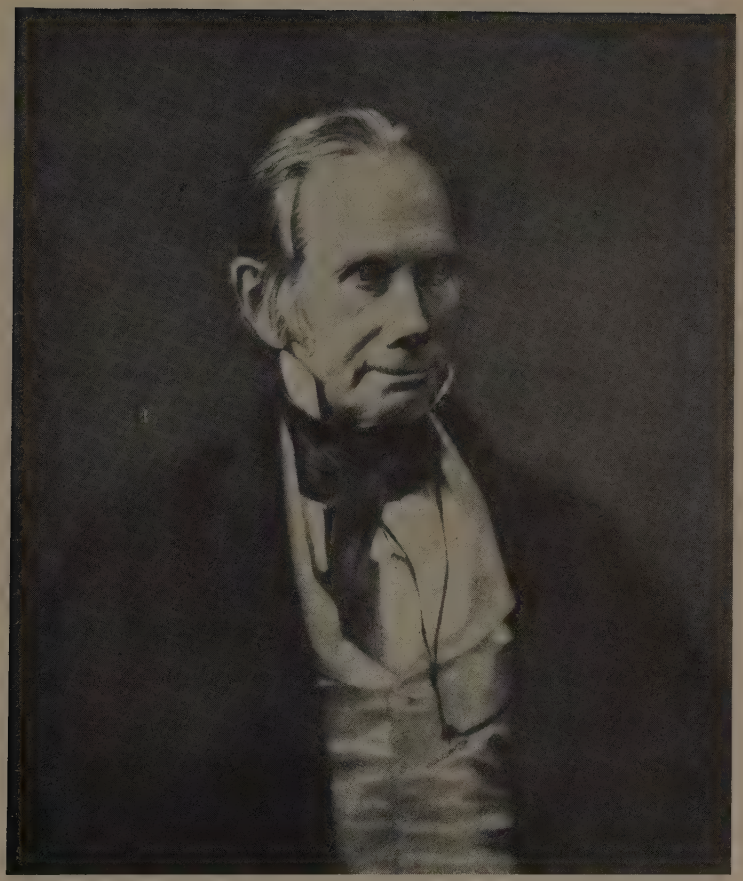
Randolph never dreamed. When he made the prediction, it took more months than it now takes days to go from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and the instantaneous transmission of intelligence by electricity was not even the subject of speculation of practical men. Yet, even with the aid of scientific achievements which Randolph would have regarded as magical, the government of a continent from Washington presents perplexing difficulties. Considering, then, the conditions as he knew them, there was nothing unreasonable in his conclusion. He, himself, might have taken rank as one of the sons of the prophets when he repeated their cry: "There is death in the pot!" Yet he supported Andrew Jackson.

Defective vision afflicted both the statesmen. Clay suffered from a sort of intellectual hypermetropia which enabled him to see with relative clearness what lay a century ahead, but which blurred his vision of what lay four years ahead. He miscalculated terribly the strength of the movement behind Jackson, and heavily overestimated the strength of the Washington oligarchy and King Caucus. As for Randolph, he permitted the enemy at hand to absorb his attention to the exclusion of the more dan-

gerous one at a distance. Perhaps he never took a square look at Jackson. Apparently he saw him always through the romantic haze his own imagination draped around the frontiersman. Perhaps he misunderstood the nature of the man, as many others did, believing that if he were once brought to Washington into intimate contact with superior minds, he might be bent to their purposes. At any rate, Clay opposed the man who should have been his friend, and Randolph supported the man who was to demolish Randolph's whole philosophy of statecraft.

And presently Randolph forced Clay to realize that all was not for the best in the best of all possible worlds. He made a speech on the floor of the Senate. The subject of the debate is of small consequence—it related to a Senate resolution calling for the production of certain documents—but the subject of Randolph's remarks was the administration, and especially the close association in it of the austere, correct and pious Adams with the frequently drunken, incessantly gambling Clay; and they wound up with the notorious passage:

> "I was defeated, horse, foot and dragoons—cut up and clean broke down by the coalition of Blifil and Black



"Black George"
(DAGUERREOTYPE OF HENRY CLAY)

George—by the combination, unheard of till then, of the Puritan with the blackleg."

This, coming from Senator Randolph, was something Clay could not dismiss with a shrug. He challenged Randolph. There was tremendous excitement in Washington and various friends tried to compose the difficulty, but to no avail. They met on the Virginia side of the Potomac late in the afternoon of April 8, 1826. The affair was conducted with all the ceremony, not to say pomposity, which the *code duello* required. One of Randolph's seconds was James Hamilton, later Governor of South Carolina during the Nullification excitement, and Thomas H. Benton, Senator from Missouri, was a spectator by permission of the principals. But the humorous devil that persecuted him all his days could not leave Randolph alone, even on the duelling field. He had on a thick buckskin glove, yet his seconds insisting upon "hairing" the trigger of his pistol. The consequence was that as he held it, muzzle downward, he touched it off before the word was given, to his intense mortification.

Clay's seconds, as, indeed, they were in duty

bound to do, made loud protests, but Clay brushed them aside impatiently and demanded that Mr. Randolph be given another pistol. This at last was done and Randolph apparently did his best to shoot his opponent in the leg, Clay's ball passing close to Randolph's waist. Benton then rushed in and tried to stop the fight, but Randolph repulsed him angrily. He had not yet made the grand gesture he had in mind, and the fact that he must again imperil his life to make it was nothing. The pistols were reloaded, and this time Clay put his bullet through Randolph's coat; but Randolph, swinging his pistol high over Clay's head, deliberately fired into the air. Clay, momentarily amazed, then rushed forward with his hand outstretched.

"You owe me a new coat, Mr. Clay," said Randolph.

Viewed in the perspective of more than a hundred years, the incident seems fantastic enough; but at the time it was regarded as particularly brilliant. Benton, to whom we owe the most circumstantial account of it, was enchanted. In the *Thirty Years' View*, his great history of the times, he fairly babbled his admiration for all concerned in the affair:

"It was about the last high-toned duel that I have witnessed, and among the highest-toned that I have ever witnessed, and so happily conducted to a fortunate issue—a result due to the noble character of the seconds as well as to the generous and heroic spirit of the principals."

Benton is the man for whom Randolph once had a seal cut in London with the motto, *Factis non verbis;* but, said the donor, the *non* should have been changed to *et.* Randolph did not live to read the *Thirty Years' View*, but he knew his Benton.

But if he escaped Clay's bullet, Randolph could not escape the familiar fiend. His conduct in the Senate had been so eccentric that a large part of Virginia believed him hopelessly insane—a view which his enemies were not slow to support by every means in their power. He was described as "dressing and undressing himself" in the Senate; as tearing up his papers in a rage and flinging them on the floor; and as committing various other breaches of Senatorial etiquette. These eccentricities, however, are in themselves nothing. Better evidence of the man's mental condition is to be found in his speeches, and it is not to be denied that they exhibit a strain so pronounced as to raise serious doubt as to the speak-

er's responsibility for his acts. At any rate, the Virginia legislature decided that the State could be better represented by some other than John Randolph of Roanoke. But it proved difficult to persuade any politician to run against him, and half a dozen names were canvassed before John Tyler, whose knack of turning his coat and replacing better men finally led him to the Presidency, was selected. Tyler was then Governor of Virginia, and there was some doubt as to whether he would resign that office for a seat in the Senate. But when inquiry was made he answered in such a way as to satisfy the inquirers without committing himself to anything. In January, 1827, he was accordingly elected by a combination of old Federalists, Randolph's enemies, and sincere Republicans who doubted Randolph's sanity.

But if the state at large doubted Randolph's desirability, the old district did not. The news that he had been defeated came like a thunderclap upon his former constituents. To remove John Randolph from Washington seemed to them something horrible, something contrary to nature. The sitting member for the district, George W. Crump, hastily announced that he would not accept a renomination,

and urged the voters to return Randolph to his old seat; which was done, with immense enthusiasm.

So back he went, to end his Congressional career where he had begun it.

CHAPTER XIII

He Goes on the Endless Quest

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THE defeat of Randolph, in January, 1827, was but one skirmish in the great struggle which it is a misnomer to call the campaign of 1828. As a matter of fact, the campaign had been going on for years—ever since the announcement in 1825 that Jackson, the candidate with the plurality both of popular and of electoral votes, had been counted out of the Presidency. It merely reached its climax in 1828.

But the defeat of Randolph in the Virginia legislature supplied the Jacksonians with much campaign thunder. It enabled them to prophesy that such would be the fate of every man who stood for the Constitution and against Federalism. And the prompt action of his old district in returning him to the House three months after he had been defeated for the Senate put him in position to do yeoman service against the Adams administration. The administration had made a martyr out of John Randolph;

and it was soon to see the error of making martyrs.

For the familiar fiend was momentarily held at bay. After the crisis of 1826 Randolph had gone for a long vacation. He made a third trip to Europe, and a stay of several months in beloved England brought him back to something like his old-time vigor. Therefore, when Congress met in the autumn of 1827, President Adams and Secretary Clay found the terrible Virginian upon them again, grimmer, more envenomed, and more determined than ever. "I bore some humble part," he said, "in putting down the dynasty of John the First, and by the grace of God, I hope to aid in putting down the dynasty of John the Second."

He did aid. During the following winter he surpassed his own extraordinary record as a leader of the opposition. He was frankly playing politics at this session, not practicing statecraft. Every move made by the administration, good or bad, encountered his relentless opposition; yet so skillfully did he manœuver that it was impossible for the administration to win public sympathy by fixing the blame upon its opponents.

In all our political history there has never been another campaign which rivaled this one for sheer bitterness. For the President himself came of a race which produced generation after generation of the best haters in America; and of the Adams clan, John Quincy was one of the bitterest as he was one of the ablest. A sample of his quality is afforded in his application to John Randolph of two lines from Ovid:

> "Pallor in ore sedet; macies in corpore toto,
> Pectora felle virent; lingua est suffusa veneno."
>
> (His face is ashen; meagre his whole body,
> His breast is green with gall; suffused with poison
> His tongue.)

Bruce remarks that the second line applied to Adams as aptly as to Randolph; it is true. And when the two confronted each other in a war to the death, men with only moderate gifts of vituperation were overwhelmed and obscured. But Randolph was not merely frenzied. He was deadly. His health was still wretched, but his mind was beautifully clear. He had announced to his constituents before the election that he should never be a candidate again

after his term, and he intended to make his last term count. His opponents were the first to admit that he did make it count; and when Andrew Jackson not merely defeated, but obliterated, John Quincy Adams in the election of 1828, some of the Adams men asserted that John Randolph of Roanoke had more to do with the result than any other three men.

Then he subsided. His work was done with the election of Jackson, and for the remainder of his term he hardly opened his mouth in the House; with the end of the session he passed out of Congress forever.

It was a curiously appropriate end to an ironic career. Before Jackson's first term had ended Randolph was to believe that he had helped elect a madman to the Presidency, for Jackson's stand on Nullification struck him as sheer lunacy. But the mischief was done. Jackson had captured the imagination of the country as Jefferson had captured it thirty years before, and Randolph's tardy opposition counted for little.

So the great aristocrat, the believer in primogeniture, the advocate of government of the masses by the classes, ended his Congressional career as he had begun it, by a mighty service to democracy. His po-

litical genius had wrought wonders in the establishment of the Jeffersonian administration. Without his energy, courage and resourcefulness as leader of the House, the great theorist of democracy might never have organized his party into the invincible fighting engine it became. It was partly due to Randolph's own work between 1801 and 1806 that Jefferson's prestige became so prodigious as to extort from Randolph in 1832 the biting comment:

> "I cannot live in this miserable, undone country, where, as the Turks follow their sacred standard, which is a pair of Mahomet's green breeches, we are governed by the old red breeches of that prince of projectors, St. Thomas of Cantingbury; and surely, Becket himself never had more pilgrims at his shrine than the saint of Monticello."

This, however, was the peevish utterance of a broken and dying man. A better estimate of Randolph's opinion of the man who had dominated his youthful imagination may be drawn from a passage in a speech which he made long after the quarrel with Jefferson:

> "I have never seen but one administration which seriously and in good faith was disposed to give up its

patronage and was willing to go farther than Congress or even the people themselves, so far as Congress represents their feelings, desired; and that was the first administration of Thomas Jefferson. He, Sir, was the only man I ever knew or heard of who really, truly, and honestly not only said *nolo episcopari* but actually refused the mitre."

The fact is, John Randolph of Roanoke was the perfect and incorrigible idealist. The best proof of it is the corrosive bitterness which led many of his countrymen into mistaking him for a cynic; for concentrated sulphuric acid is milky-mild by comparison with the soul of an idealist whose hero has failed to come up to his specifications. In another century another President lived through Jefferson's experience again; for Woodrow Wilson was never hated as bitterly by men who opposed him from the beginning as he was by those who first followed, and then outran him.

But Randolph was more than a thorough-going idealist. He was also incorrigible. Not only did he believe in honor, in honesty, and in truth, but he believed that these things might somewhere, sometime, be found embodied in a politician. There was that in his nature which responded instantly to strength;

and whenever he found a strong man, his tendency was to attribute to that man all the virtues which he idealized. He reacted so to Monroe, to Nathaniel Macon, to Spencer Roane of Virginia, and to half a dozen others. In every case save that of Macon alone, sooner or later something happened to chill his enthusiasm, whereupon his idealism soured to an incredible acidity. It was so in the case of Andrew Jackson. By the time the campaign ended, Randolph had persuaded himself that here, at last, was the great chieftain under whom the republic of his dreams should be established.

Therefore, as he had worked to fortify the position of the great theoretical democrat, who was destined to demolish the principle of an aristocratic republic, so he worked with similar enthusiasm to elect the great practical democrat, who was destined to demolish the last vestiges of aristocratic practice in government. A horrible disillusionment and a resultant bitter revulsion were bound to come.

But they were postponed for a while, and by a curious method. When Jackson went into office, so did the man who "rowed to his object with muffled oars." The new Secretary of State was Martin Van

Buren. The Red Fox was far indeed from being an idealist or a visionary. He was a political realist of the first order. A dozen years later the very keenness of his political vision was to prove his ruin, when he foresaw the hopelessness of adherence to the cause of the slave-power which, nevertheless, was strong enough to pull him down because he accepted the inevitable. But in the beginning of the Jackson administration Mr. Secretary Van Buren saw at a glance how extremely unstable a compound was this combination of Randolph of Roanoke and Andrew Jackson; and he devised a method of postponing the explosion which he could not prevent. This method was the simple one of removing Randolph as far as possible from the scene.

Therefore, shortly after the inauguration, Mr. Randolph received from the new President a remarkable communication. It was a letter offering him the post of American minister to Russia, and the offer was couched in terms at once so graceful and so strong that a refusal, without a gross breach of courtesy, would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible. John Randolph was about as well equipped for diplomacy as a blacksmith is for em-

broidery, and Martin Van Buren knew it, if President Jackson didn't; but he knew other things which were, for his purposes, more important. For one thing, our relations with Russia were not at the time of great importance; the negotiation of a treaty of commerce was about all that could be expected of our representative. For another, the post at the court of the Czar was an honorable one, and its offer was a form of recognition which not even a Randolph could despise. Finally, and most important of all, St. Petersburg, considering the means of transportation then available, was about as far from Washington as a man might get and still remain in this world. Rowing to his object with muffled oars, the Red Fox succeeded in ejecting John Randolph from the country neatly and dextrously.

After serving in the convention which was writing a new constitution for Viginia, and in which he distinguished himself by opposing every suggestion of a change, Randolph therefore prepared for his departure to the realm of the Muscovite. But he was not without misgivings. He had pleaded the poor state of his health as an excuse for refusing the offer, but had been gently yet firmly over-ruled; however,

he did make the stipulation that if he found the climate of the city by the Neva too rigorous he might retire for the winter to a milder region. On the letter making this request the President himself indorsed an order that it be granted.

Randolph arrived in St. Petersburg in August, 1830, and instituted negotiations looking to the drafting of a treaty of commerce. But it soon became evident that the negotiations would be protracted for months, owing to the leisurely methods of the Russian court; and as winter came on, Randolph found the climate worse than the worst he had feared. Therefore, availing himself of the permission granted him, he retired to London. But his health grew steadily worse, instead of better. In the following summer he had a hemorrhage from the lungs, and gave up the idea of returning to Russia. Instead in late August he took passage for New York, and after a distressing voyage of six weeks reached his native land, more dead than alive.

This seems to be the truth of the matter, as far as existing records can reveal it; but the business enabled the partisans of Adams and Clay in Congress to make a field day of it. They brought all manner

Randolph in England
(A CONTEMPORARY CARTOON)

of charges against Randolph because he drew his salary and expenses; and fifty years later Henry Adams, in his life of Randolph, referred to it as "the most flagrant bit of jobbery in the annals of the United States government."

To incur the hatred of the house of Adams was a serious thing, for it smouldered through generations.

Now the sands were running low, indeed, in John Randolph's glass. He was obviously in the last stages of pulmonary tuberculosis, and as his vitality ebbed, the familiar fiend crept up upon him again. For some time after his return from Russia he voluntarily immured himself in the house of a friend in Virginia, realizing that he was in no fit state, mentally, to trust himself abroad. But he wrote incessantly, and his letters, especially those to the President of the United States, bear unmistakable evidence of his mental aberration. He sank into physical grossness, too, drinking heavily and having recourse constantly to opium. It would be ghoulish to attempt to trace in detail this descent into the shadows; but in May, 1832, his mental condition cleared up somewhat, and a gleam of the old John Randolph,

like the afterglow of one of his Virginia sunsets, lighted the end of his life.

Jackson's deadly enmity to the Bank of the United States met with his whole-hearted approval, and he was still an administration man when the Nullification crisis came, and then, late in the year, Old Hickory whirled his battle-axe above his head and brought it crashing down in that famous Proclamation which is his undeniable claim to rank among the significant Presidents; "the ferocious and bloodthirsty proclamation of our Djezzar Pasha," John Randolph called it.

The idealist was dynamited again. Jackson had turned out to be like Jefferson, only much worse. If numbers were to prevail; if the raw West were to weigh for more in the councils of the nation than old Virginia; if a sovereign state might be coerced by the government at Washington; then, indeed, the aristocratic republic was in ruins, the Virginia squirarchy was disinherited, the old order was broken and cast down. Only one response could be made to the Nullification Proclamation, if the Southern system were to survive, and Randolph understood it instantly. "The apathy of our people is most alarm-

ing," he wrote. "If they do not rouse themselves to a sense of our condition, and put down this wretched old man, the country is irretrievably ruined."

From his standpoint, Randolph was right. Had the South struck then, it might have lost, but there would have been a chance of success. Thirty years later, there was none, for throughout those thirty years the North had been steadily gaining strength and the South as steadily losing it. But it was not to be. Henry Clay, the bane of John Randolph's existence, rushed into the breach with a compromise; Calhoun accepted it. The moment passed, and the doom of the South, of John Randolph's South, was sealed.

Yet at the moment Randolph, still representative of his section, believed that some sort of victory had been won, and was warm in his expressions of admiration for Clay. He was wrong there. Clay perhaps had prevented war, but by postponing the conflict until the North was better prepared, the man of the West insured the destruction of the Virginia that Randolph labored so hard to save. There was a victory; but it was the spirit of youth that won it.

From that day Virginia was down, and the American System triumphed over her.

In the following April, that is, in 1833, the old restlessness flared up for the last time in John Randolph of Roanoke. He undertook to make a tour of the district that had been his for so long, but his physical state was so low that his progress was halting and painful. Again and again he collapsed and lay for days near death. But as soon as he recovered enough to stagger to a carriage he was off and away. Presently he turned north, and eventually came to Washington. He was carried into the Senate chamber and given a chair. Henry Clay was speaking.

"Raise me up," said Randolph. "I want to hear that voice again."

Presently the address was concluded, and Clay approached the sick man.

"Raise me up," said Randolph again. Clay offered his hand, saying, "Mr. Randolph, I hope you are better, sir."

"No, sir," said Randolph, "I am a dying man, and I came here expressly to have this interview with you."

The long duel was over, although neither knew

who was victor and who was vanquished. They clasped hands and parted forever.

What wild urge was spurring Randolph, who can say? He pressed onward, ostensibly to Philadelphia, to take ship for England; but in reality, he was bound upon a blind quest, seeking he knew not what. He arrived in Philadelphia in a night of storm; and in a wretched carriage with broken windows, the only one obtainable at the time, he was driven from hotel to hotel, seeking lodgings. When at last he arrived at the house of one Badger, on North Third street, he was already in a state of collapse. It was the end of the trail.

Four days longer he lived, his mind now shadowed, now piercing keen. The young Quaker physician whom Badger had called in, Dr. Parrish, found himself with a patient such as he had never had before—a patient who alarmed, amused, amazed and enchanted him almost all at once. Young Dr. Parrish did not realize that he was living over, in those four days, the experiences of a Congressional district, of a state, and finally of a nation for the last thirty years, but he felt so strongly the charm and the terror of the man that he wrote it all down soon after, and

so preserved for us a singularly clear picture of the deathbed of John Randolph of Roanoke.

And it was as his life had been—shadows, shot through with rich gleams; the shadows were peopled with the figures of great men, and fiends, of Negro slaves, and hunting dogs, and horses and boyhood companions. His fevered eyes saw once more the faces he had looked upon long ago—George Washington, and long Thomas Jefferson with his red hair and his red breeches, and his smile that could warm a young boy's heart into passionate devotion; the Vice-Regal carriage of Vice-President Adams, and Brother Dicky spurned by the coachman's whip; Nat Macon, honest and silent, and Benton, honest and wordy; Ned Livingston, the rotten mackerel, Van Buren, the Red Fox, the wretched old man Jackson, pale Calhoun, Henry Clay, the Emperor of Russia, and John, the Negro body-servant, actually standing there in the flesh along with Dr. Parrish. One thought tore at his tortured mind, and over and over again he struggled to make it clear; it was fear that somehow the emancipation of his slaves would not be carried out. He had written it in his will—but had he? Or had he canceled the provision? It was so

hard to remember—so desperately hard to think clearly, with his breath rattling in his throat and the familiar fiend peeping over his shoulder. And so many other thoughts, so many memories of long ago kept intruding themselves—of Judge St. George Tucker, of Bermuda, of Cornwallis' guns at Yorktown, and of the mother who had understood.

But Dr. Parrish understood, too, and although, being a Quaker, he would not swear, he affirmed mightily that the last coherent utterance, to him, of John Randolph of Roanoke, was an urgent insistence that the emancipation of his Negroes be carried out, "Especially for this man," indicating the weeping John.

They brought him back to Virginia and buried him in his native soil. And ever since, his people have cherished his memory, and repeated his sayings, and rejoiced in his courage and his honesty and his truth.

For despite the bestial cruelty of the mob, the common people in the long run are kind. They forget much and forgive much that their heroes have done, if only there be something gleaming to salvage from dust and ashes. John Randolph of Roanoke

left them much to treasure. His quest was fruitless. He found neither happiness nor peace for himself, nor could he establish the safety of the state he loved. But what man's quest was ever completely successful? He was defeated largely by his own faults and failings. But in that who cannot call him brother? He lacerated himself as mercilessly as he lacerated others. He was frequently unjust and bitter. His statecraft was based on a mistaken conception of the realities of the situation, and therefore it not only failed, but deserved to fail. So much must be admitted.

But the man served his state for thirty years with no stain upon his personal honor. Not only did he keep his fingers out of the public treasury, but he never prostituted his intelligence in the struggle for office. He indulged in no political deals for the sake of patronage, and he never held his tongue for fear of a powerful opponent. *Nil admirari* he had written over his crest—be overwhelmed by nothing. He lived up to it. *Fari quae sentiat* he had written below —act as you believe, is a fair translation and a fair description of John Randolph's public career.

Honor and truth and courage he had to command

the admiration of his people; and to stir their pride he had that touch of poetic genius which could translate their vague, obscure thoughts into stately, sonorous English which rang through the halls of Congress like a bugle call through the cacophony of a city street; and to win their love, he had loved them passionately, if blindly.

THE END

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The debt that this volume owes to the monumental work of William Cabell Bruce, *John Randolph of Roanoke*, a biography in two volumes, published in 1924, hardly needs formal acknowledgment, since it is self-evident. But Senator Bruce increased that debt, while this book was in preparation, by assistance at various times, and this personal courtesy demands special mention. Furthermore, in justice to him it should be emphasized that while he furnished many of the facts set forth here, he is responsible for none of the conclusions drawn from the facts, and is not necessarily in agreement with all, or any, of them.

The Randolph bibliography is immense. For the better part of a century every historian, journalist, and political commentator, and most of the essayists, wrote about John Randolph of Roanoke.

Three biographies, however, demand special attention from the student of Randolph. The first was that of Hugh A. Garland, who had seen his subject

in the flesh, and who wrote while still under the spell of his singular personal charm. Furthermore, Garland wrote in 1857, four years before events proved that Randolph's intransigence was not successful, but suicidal, statecraft. Hence Garland's two volumes seem today too eulogistic and historically unsound. Nevertheless, the work is highly readable, the treatment of the Randolph letters, in particular, being excellent.

The second important life of Randolph was written by Henry Adams, and was published in 1882. This was less than twenty years after the end of the Civil War, and there is evidence of the fact on every page. Adams, of course, was too intelligent to be merely a waver of the bloody shirt, but he had, in 1882, small affection for Southerners; and one is tempted to assert that of all Southerners, he liked John Randolph least. But he was the best writer who has ever undertaken a life of Randolph, and his book retains no small value simply on account of its craftsmanship.

The third is the work of Senator Bruce, referred to above. It is probably definitive; at any rate it is hard to believe that Bruce has overlooked any important

fact. But it comprises two large volumes, which means that it is too formidable for a popular biography.

Mention must be made also of the sketch of Randolph in Gamaliel Bradford's *Damaged Souls*. Bradford was the first to treat the man simply as a man, rather than as a political influence, a historical personage, a wizard of statecraft, or as a symbol of something.

The profit I have had of the scholarship of the men who did the original research work, and especially of these four, I gladly acknowledge.

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